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J. C. Warren
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Aug. 4. 1851.

SERMON I.

DELIVERED IN TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON, BEFORE THE CONVENTION OF THE EASTERN DIOCESE, SEPTEMBER, 29, 1830.

BY THE REV. CARLTON CHASE.
Rector of Emmanuel Church, Bellows' Falls Vt.

LOVE TO MAN NECESSARILY CONNECTED WITH LOVE TO GOD.

MAT. XXII, 37, 38, 39. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
This is the first and great commandment.
And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

IF I leave the peculiarities of our Church to repose on their already sufficiently established foundation, and invite your thoughts to realities permanent and influencing beyond all visible institutions, I hope I shall not be regarded as evading the appropriate duty of the occasion. I can look at the subject in no point of view but I am brought directly to the conclusion, that the Church of Christ is a RESULT, proceeding from, and obtained through the influence of truth,—truth not temporary and incidental—not the truth of circumstance and expediency—but truth eternal as the being of God. Eternal truth, made luminous to the mind by the Spirit of God operating in the truth and in the mind, is the sovereign instrument of transformation to souls of sinners. And without its effectual working the materials for a church cannot exist among men,—without its continued influence in sanctification, the building, when reared, cannot endure.

The first of the commands repeated above is founded on that great truth, every where asserted in the Scriptures and witnessed by the inward "light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,"—namely, that God is worthy of the supreme love of all intelligent beings; and that their happiness and glory depend on their making him their chief good—their "all in all."

The second command is founded on the truth, that no one of the creatures of God *has* or *can* have an interest detached from the interest of all others,—that he who seeks for happiness by a course *strictly and exclusively his own*, will never find it—because God's eternal system is such, that the glory of the individual is bound up in the principles of his government over all —and because there is no *law* or *principle* in the universe, by which selfish aims and selfish rules of pursuit can obtain the crown of enduring good.

On these grounds rest the commands,—and those commands we may consider as a mode of revealing and impressing these truths.

It is not my purpose to enter formally and at large into an analysis of love to God, or of love to men. The possession of love is a question of *fact*—to be settled by reflection and consciousness in the bosom of each individual. He who possesses it, cannot fail to *know*, that he possesses it,—because the exercise is voluntary—and we cannot exert the will responsibly without being conscious of the exertion.

On the other hand, it is by no means certain, that they who possess it not, will not sometimes imagine, that they possess it,—will not sometimes give to other feelings and other exercises the misnomer of love to God—or, as the case may be, of love to men.

To convince such persons of their errour, one method is, to call their attention to the quality of their fruits,—to show them, that if they truly loved God, or spiritually loved man, their life would be a series of far other aims and far other deeds, than it is.

Another method is, to show them how their feelings and exercises may be fully accounted for without admitting the presence of any permanent spiritual principle whatever.—In this discourse you will perceive an occasional reference to both methods.

As a basis to some practical suggestions I shall endeavour to show, that between true love to God, and true love to man there is an *inseparable* and *necessary* connexion. The one *cannot* exist without the other,—insomuch that in the emphatical language of St. John, "He who says he loves God, and loves not his brother man, is a liar."—You will observe, that I speak of a NECESSARY CONNEXION, and not of an uncertain *relation*. He who really possesses the one, really possesses the other also.

In the Scriptures we find this connexion everywhere brought to view in one form or another,—in the form of *doctrine*, or in the form of *example*. St. Paul's view of it was so clear and decided, that he thought it no robbery of God to pronounce these words—which on any other principle could not be justified without the most liberal explanations—"All the law is fulfilled in one word,—even in this—thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The writer knew that this holy sentiment could not exist but as a shoot from the root of love to a common Father; and as trained under the influence of just views of his government over all.

Those gifted saints, whose spirits went up daily to worship around God's throne, while their tabernacle remained below—how was it with them? How was it with those high-communing souls, whom the Holy Spirit has set forth as our examples? Do we find, that a love of themselves and of God left no room in their hearts for an affectionate interest in the spiritual welfare of their brethren in the world? No,—we find, that the love of Christ constrained them to love the souls of men. What persecutions—what afflictions—what labours they endured, that they might fully preach the Gospel of eternal salvation to sin-

ners! And what was the impulse to those astonishing efforts? It was the *one* impulse of *one love*, having Christ and man for its objects--and the end everlasting life to a perishing world.

An Apostle prays thus for the Thessalonians—"The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you." If this was religion in the hearts of men then, can there be any difficulty in the question, what should be religion in the hearts of us now; And therefore what new doctrine *is* this, that a man may live quietly and happily in the possession of love to God, while he looks with indifference on the poor multitudes around him, who are "without hope and without God in the world?" Selfishness was and is the great sin of the human race. And is it after all to be refined into a holy sentiment of religion? No,—God's eternal system is such, that the glory of the individual is bound up in the principles of his government over all. There is no law or principle in the universe, by which selfish affections—selfish aims—and selfish modes of pursuit can obtain the crown of enduring good.

Let us consider the human soul with reference to the act of receiving and submitting to the influence of this powerful sentiment.

The heart does not fix its affections on God without an insight of his character—of his character in a state of *display*. Our faith indeed acquiesces in the declaration, that he is essentially excellent. But we do not realize his excellence in entire abstraction from *all working*—from all out-flowing of good. The beam of light, which enters the eye of faith, comes from a working God. And this beam is traced upward by the mind, till we obtain the amazing idea of a supreme personality as the ground and source of personality to the individuals of our race,—and not only so, but the scource and finisher of a system of spiritual operations, which fill the beholder with astonishment and delight. Thus it is not through the purport of

names and definitions alone, that the soul is enabled to realize in God an object worthy of perfect love. It fixes its contemplation on "the wonders, that he doeth for the children of men,"—and in them it finds a manifestation of his love to a world of self-ruined sinners. And can a renovated soul think of its own experience of mercy—can it view the system of means, which has been appointed for the bringing of wanderers home—can it remember, that "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son for its salvation—without feeling, that if God so loved men, men ought to love one another. No—it is impossible. Love must be dead in that soul, which finds not this fruit of the spirit,—this impulse to the love of fellow beings.

You perceive, that I do not rest this matter exclusively on the ground of a positive *verbal* command,—I also rest it firmly on that nature of spiritual things, which by divine disposal was the antecedent ground of the command itself. The command is but the declaration of a necessary tendency in the soul of a regenerated man,—and by trying himself on that declaration, man may learn whether he has professed the faith of Christ *in* faith—whether the "love of God has in very deed been shed abroad in his heart."—And thus, though the second commandment in our Lord's summary had never been given in terms, yet he who had been truly brought to love God, would find included in that love an impulse to the love of his fellow men. He would learn by heartfelt suggestion, that if a man love not his brother, whom he hath seen—and in whom and around whom he has witnessed the manifestations of God's mercy and love in a thousand forms—it *cannot* be, that the love of God is a ruling principle in his soul.

That a man may know so much of God, and be so transformed in his immortal spirit, as truly to love him—I say not now with *all* his heart, and soul and mind and strength, but with a measure of his being's energy proportioned to his insight of

truth.—and thus in humble hope to present himself for trial on the first and great commandment—without any reference of his thoughts or leaning of his soul to that other commandment, which is like it—without finding in his love of God a reason and an impulse to the love of man, who is "made after the similitude of God"—is a proposition, which never was—never will be—and never can be realized in fact. The things of the spirit cannot be so separated. Christian graces cannot be so selected and so excluded—so cultivated and so neglected. Reason denounces the thought as inconsistent with those universal principles on which character is formed—and with those properties of being of which every thoughtful man is conscious.

Accordingly few people are satisfied with making a profession of love to God without making at the same time a profession of something, to which they can with fair appearance give the name of love to men. But, my brethren—and I appeal particularly to the pastoral experience of my brethren in the ministry—are you not often pained to find a want of the reality, where the profession is boldly advanced? Do you not with distressing frequency meet with professing Simons, who think that the gift of God may be purchased with an offering that is not the heart? And do not both duty and love constrain you to break in on the repose of delusive hopes, by showing how feelings and exercises may be fully accounted for without admitting the presence of any permanent spiritual principle whatever? "By their fruits ye will know them." "Try the spirits whether they be of God."

Self-complacency, strengthened by education and the supposed merit of merely external compliances, readily brings one to the conclusion, that it cannot be, he is so *unnatural* as not to love his Maker. What! says he, will you rank me with scoffers and atheists?—And as to loving his fellow-men, he is prepared to show, that he has given the best evidence of it in the world—being able to name the very time, when he forgave a tres-

passer, clothed a shivering family—wept with the afflicted, or delivered a poor creature from difficulty and danger.

But let us look at this,—perhaps it will not bear an examination creditable to the self-complaisant professor.—People who write or speak about religion, have, of course, frequent occasion to mention *love to God.* But may we not—must we not doubt in many cases superficially fair, whether they have meditated deeply, intelligently and feelingly on the meaning of that expression? Can they hold forth the object of their professed affection in any sort of detail or analysis? Men cannot love the mere combinations of an alphabet—or mere sounds—mere creatures of vocal articulation. If we truly love God, we love him "as *seeing* him who is invisible,"—we have an insight of his attributes or moral qualities. It is these, then, which are the *realized* objects of our affection,—and not a name, or a sound, or a fancied form. It is on the divine perfections, that the strong free mind of the renovated man fastens. And in view of these, his soul is enlarged—his admiration kindled, and his powers of praise brought into high and holy action. *Love to God* is love of truth—of holiness—of justice—of mercy—of benevolence—of wisdom, as united in infinite perfection in one and the same being.

Now, does not every one who knows any thing of the manner in which the objects of his love or hatred affect his character and desires, see plainly the impossibility of loving these qualities without possessing some measure of them? Without a gradual assimilation of his own spirit to that excellence, with which his faith invests the God of his affections? It is only when God has begotten us again through the truth, that we *can* feel a real approbation of his holiness. Nor can we cordially approve his benevolence without possessing at the same time a disposition to support and carry forward those great designs which his benevolence has formed for the benefit of men. Just conceptions of his character have a transforming tendency.

Beholding the glory of the Lord, men are changed into the same image.

Bring the views and feelings of men to examination by these principles, and I fear it will be found in many cases, that what has been put to the credit-side as *love to God*, is nothing more than a customary respect for a distinguished name,—and that what has been claimed as love to men, is nothing more than the gentle and sympathetic feelings of our social nature.—

> "They worship nature in the hill and valley
> Not knowing what they love."

If we inquire on what ground in the object we ought to regard the well-being of our fellow-men with an affectionate interest, we shall see, that spiritual *love* is not the same thing as humanity and friendly feelings. The former, indeed, never exists without the latter,—but the history of the whole unchristianized world proves abundantly, that the latter may exist without the former. By spiritual love I mean a love of soul to soul—of the permanent part of man to the permanent part of man. The ground is plainly this—that, though evil and disobediont now, they are capable, through the power of God and the continuance of his mercies, of becoming holy,—that by aid of that love, with which God still regards them, they may yet rise to high and blessed abodes—may yet be raised from the darkness of ignorance, the debasement of sin, and the death of moral sensibility—may yet reach the top of Pisgah in time to survey the blessed land with eyes of faith,—not because they have a visible frame and an animal nature—not because they are able to taste the sweetness of food—to enjoy the suns of summer—to surprise us with strange deeds—not because they are so constituted as to rejoice in health and suffer in sickness,—but because God has given them a *spirit*, which must live forever,—a spirit, which by the power of truth and the grace of God, may yet be saved from misery and sin, and be sent up to dwell forever with the Lord.

Such is the light in which wicked man is to be viewed by man as an object of christian affection. We say nothing of character—of virtues—of moral worth,—but we insist on the *capabilities* of character, which the mercy of God permits still to remain to him. We present him as a being, who needs but a spiritual regeneration and sanctification, to fit him for the eternal kingdom of Christ. And we invite attention to the means, which Christ has entrusted to all who love him, of doing something towards advancing that important change.

It is easy, then, to answer the question, whether humanity—kindliness of disposition—or natural sympathy, towards the sufferers of bodily pain and privation, is nothing less than the brotherly love of Christ's Gospel. It is infinitely less. It is entirely a distinct thing,—insomuch, that in the social virtues of the world a man may be irreproachable—while his heart is an utter stranger to the peculiar impressions of religion, and to those affections with which the children of the Gospel contemplate the character of God.—Think not that I mean to denounce the social sympathies; No,—let them be directed to man *as* man—as a being endowed with an immortal soul,—and not to man as a mere earth-born animal, whose ephemeris alternates between suffering and revelry.

It is evident, then, that true love to men is very nearly connected with true love to God. The grounds in each case are intimately and necessarily connected with the most essential principles of revealed religion. Therefore, according to St. John, "If a man say, I love God, and loveth not his brother, he is a liar." He is still a stranger to holy affections—and has yet to learn "which be the first principles of the doctrine of Christ."

In many points of view, this, my brethren, is a subject of great practical importance; for without a clear discovery of the inseparable connexion between love to God and love to man—love to man, sinner as he is—and a distinct consciousness of its

existence in the heart, there can be no breadth of vision to the eye of faith. Divine rewards, if thought of at all, will be thought of only as the miser thinks of his gold—which he values for no reason but because it is his own. He whose religion gives him no impulse to exertion in the cause of others' happiness, ought to conclude—as all men must conclude for him—that as yet he knows nothing and feels nothing as he ought. There will be no solitude in Heaven,—and the man who can content himself with solitary affections, solitary desires and selfish aims, will find when he dies, that the Saviour has prepared no mansion for such a character.

If the views which have been exhibited, have struck your minds with force, you have not waited till this moment to learn, that they call us to a solemn self-examination. May it not be, that we have lived under a profession of religion without realizing its characteristic energies? Without that only true love, which prompts to abundant exertion in the harvest-field of our God? If we are indifferent to the eternal interests of men—if we can witness the miseries of sin without a tear of compassion —why should we not conclude, that we are indifferent to sin in ourselves,—and that our profession of love to God is wholly a mistake of our self-love? That we have fallen into the delusion of looking for rewards, while we are far from being in the character to enjoy them?—I certainly would not say, that it is the duty of all to become preachers of the Gospel in the professional sense of the expression,—though I must say, it is the duty of all to receive and encourage those who are such, "that they may be fellow-helpers to the truth." Let no one think himself too insignificant to be bound to so high a duty. Every man has his sphere of influence,—and within that he may do much good, or much evil. The one or the other he must and will do,—for there is no neutral ground.

Are we "ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God?" We go forth professedly in the name of him, who died

that sinners might live. When we declare his love to a guilty and perishing world, do we it in love? Or do we it as the business of an office? Is it truly our heart's desire and prayer to God, that men may be "saved with an everlasting salvation?" Do we realize the glory of the work of truth? And do our hearts glow, when we witness its triumphs? Does it make us happy to see the clouds of ignorance and superstition and corruption vanish before the sun of righteousness? And do we look forward in joy of faith to the hour, when our own little flocks shall cluster around the throne of his glory, and when all the nations of the earth shall be gathered before him? These are not the labours, the desires, the joys and the hopes of flesh and blood. They are the genuine fruits of an unfeigned love to Christ and to the souls of men.

On the other hand, are we cold-hearted and formal—approaching our work as a task, and turning to other sources for our enjoyments—averse to solemn and absorbing views of religion, it is to be feared, that we shall neither save ourselves, nor them that hear us. "How dwelleth the love of God in us?" We as well as others must be judged by our fruits.

There is another thing, my brethren, whose relation to this subject you cannot fail to see. It is the missionary enterprize —an enterprize, which claims all hearts alike—the hearts of the people no less than the hearts of the Clergy. If we say we love God—if we profess to be disciples of Christ, while we think little and coldly of the moral degradation and spiritual darkness which overspread a great portion of the world, is it not probable, that we count upon a character, which we do not possess, and rely on general professions without submitting to the proper influence of Christian truth? How can the Christian, who knows that the religion of Christ alone can qualify sinners for the joys of Heaven, stand still, and do nothing, and say nothing, and give nothing—while millions of his fellow-creatures, in whose forefathers Paul turned his back, when he

came westward preaching the kingdom of Christ, are perishing like beasts? I must still maintain, that true Christian affections are so inconsistent with such apathy, that they cannot exist together in the nature of things. But though "the root of the matter be found in us," are not both our affections and our exertions much below the point of duty? And ought we not earnestly to pray, that God will more and more increase in us that spirit of life, without which the heart is never free, nor the hand liberal, nor the purpose resolute? We must not rely on our own will, nor on a strength not received from him. Our sufficiency is of him—"without whom nothing is strong, nothing holy."

I hope, my brethren, I am not addressing mere earth-born and earth-ending believers. I address *living* and *rational souls*. I address the deathless principle in you, which glowed in the breasts of Apostles and martyrs—and which enabled them to throw all things into the Lord's hands, that they might win souls to happiness in him. Let not then your hearts be narrow. Let not the boundaries of towns and states be the boundaries of your Christian love. Let it be your heart's desire and prayer to God and labour of love, that all nations and kindreds and tongues may come to the knowledge of him, and of salvation by Christ. Say not, "Depart in peace—be ye warmed and be ye filled," while you DO nothing. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" for yourselves,—then, "tell it out among the heathen, that the Lord is king." Aspire to the honor of contributing to the Redeemer's glory,—aspire to the honor of holding up the hands and encouraging the hearts of the messengers of peace, and be nobly ambitious of doing *something* for which souls, now ignorant, wicked and degraded, will bless you in the day of Christ.

SERMON II.

DELIVERED IN CHRIST CHURCH, HARTFORD, BEFORE THE CONNECTICUT CHURCH SCHOLARSHIP SOCIETY, AUGUST 4TH, 1830.

BY THE REV. ALONZO POTTER.
Rector of St. Paul's Church, Boston.

ISAIAH, VI, 8. I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, here am I, send me.

A voice like this which was heard by the Prophet, seems now addressed to us. At no period since the advent of Christ, has the demand for his ministers been more general or more urgent than at present. The whole world seems as a field whitening unto the harvest. Even Pagan nations tire of their superstition, and stand ready to turn from dumb idols, to serve the living God. The feet of them who publish the good tidings, are seen on their mountains, and are welcomed to their plains. The Bible proclaims in more than a hundred of their languages, the truth as it is in Jesus.. Multitudes, too, in almost every christian land, awake from their long and disgraceful apathy—and feeling the worth of their religion, the claims of distant and benighted heathen, and the solemn import of the Saviour's last command, they call for agents who will dispense their charity through all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. At such a period the Lord seems to address his church in the words of the text, " *Whom shall I send, and who*

will go for us? Where is the zeal which will avail itself of these signal opportunities for extending christianity? Where are the high and various endowments so essential in one who acts as Ambassador for God? In whom is combined the learning—the intellectual discipline—the fertile invention—the prompt and persuasive eloquence, without which no Missionary on Heathen shores can duly maintain the honor of his master? Where is the patience under injury—the meekness in spite of contradiction—the perseverance which puts difficulty and danger at defiance—the self-sacrificing spirit which is ready to forsake all things for Christ and follow him even unto death? Or where is the individual possessing these qualities who is willing to consecrate them to the service of the Pagan—who is ready to quit home, and kindred, and the refinements of civilized society, to sit down amidst drifting snows and burning sands and barbarous hordes—who for the sake of the glory that is to follow, is ready to share in the shame and dishonor which cling to his Master's cross, and to take his place beside that Master, in an early and unhonored grave?—Yes methinks the voice of the Lord does say even now while we speak, "*Whom shall I send—and who will go for us?*"

And we hear this voice, not merely in view of the extension of christianity. We hear it too, when we look on lands already possessing this christianity. What, my friends, but formalism is the religion of multitudes on multitudes in this and other christian countries? What power does this religion, instinct as it is with all that can awe and allure the heart, exert even over its nominal disciples? Who does not feel, when he looks at the pains which every man is ready to expend on his farm or his merchandise, and compares with these the pains which are bestowed on an inheritance that is incorruptible—on an enterprize which puts at stake the *soul's* last and most precious hope—when on the one hand he sees the resistless power of the weapon which assails him, and marks on the other how feeble is the impression it

makes on his conscience and his heart; when again he considers how the forum and the senate-house speak to the sensibilities, and rouse into action the latent energies of men, while the pulpit, too often, sends forth its appeal year after year, without visible effect; when in fine he sees the intellectual and cultivated turning from the ministrations of the sanctuary with indifference or disgust, and presuming to look down on the faith they present, as devoid of truth, or undeserving consideration —who does not feel at such a time, that there is a call for purer and more powerful ministrations? What herald of the cross, be his powers ever so great, does not feel that the sword of the spirit needs to be wielded by a mightier arm, and carried home with a surer and more unfaltering aim than his own? Who does not, for himself and for his brethren, crave the possession of more commanding arguments, of more pungent and soul-stirring eloquence? Who does not pray for men who will go forth in the spirit and power of Elias; for men of intenser study, more generous zeal, and more humble fervent prayer; for men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, who will speak in tones that can be heard, and which being heard, shall be felt and obeyed. Here are children of pleasure, sold to the service of sense, and of sin! Whom shall God send, to break the spell by which they are enslaved, and set their souls at large? Here are men of talent and perverted literature; men who affect to despise the cross, and to look down with scorn, upon the meek and peaceful spirit of our religion! Where is the fearless and skilful ambassador, who will speak to them in the demonstration of the spirit and of power; who will make manifest the wisdom and power which are concentred in this cross of Christ, and cause them to feel, that even the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men! Here in fine, are immortal souls, chained to earth and immersed in the pursuit of gain or glory! Who will go in God's name and break in upon

their sordid dreams, and array before them the promises, the threatenings, and the retributions of an eternal world? *We speak unto you young men, for you are strong!* You enter the church at a time peculiarly auspicious to the exercise of an earnest and efficient ministry; you bring with you the versatility of youthful talent and the ardour of youthful zeal; you can bend your powers upon any point, and impart to them any assignable degree of discipline and force; to you then especially is this summons of the text addressed — *Whom shall I send—and who will go for us?*

But methinks there is another fact, in view of which this summons speaks to us in still louder tones. Christianity is not only to be extended to the dark places of superstition and idolatry. It is not only to be endued with new power, and invested with new dominion where it already reigns; but it is to be *sustained* in an age, and in a land which threaten it with extinction. Yes I say *sustained.* I insist not now on the duty of propagating it in foreign countries. I speak not now of the slight hold it has on the intellect and conscience, even of those who profess and call themselves Christians. But I say that this is the time, and here is the country, in which we may tremble even for the *existence of our faith.* I adopt not the rash calculations of the zealot, nor do I indulge in the groundless apprehensions of the faint-hearted But speaking the words of truth and soberness I do ask, is there nothing in our condition and prospects to justify evil-foreboding? Is not this, in the first place, an age of unexampled activity? Is not the human mind hurried forward by the passion for adventure and gain, at a rate which threatens to divert it from all sober and solemnizing thought? Are not the useful arts and sciences advancing with unprecedented speed, and must not a religion, which would control and guide them aright, move on with a speed still more unprecedented? To be stationary at such a crisis when all around is progressive—to be content with the

old rate of progress, or with the former channels of influence, when all else is quickened into such unwonted life and activity, is really to decline. At such a period, Christianity can sustain itself in no way, but by catching and transferring to its followers the enterprizing spirit of the age. If, then, we would not see our religion robbed even of its present power, if we would not see its sceptre, already so feeble, utterly broken, and its light, now so dim, fade away into total darkness, we must rise and quit ourselves like men. We must summon, round our altars, ministers whose hearts have been baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. We must multiply their number and see to it, that they are skillful workmen, rightly dividing the word of truth and needing not to be ashamed; heralds who will lift up the jubilee trumpet and cause its thrilling sounds to reverberate throughout the land; whose notes shall wax louder and louder as the din of human enterprize and the voice of human strife increases, and who shall be heard above all the sounds of commotion, and all the conflict of the moral elements, calling men to repent, and believe the gospel, and be saved!

And if there be a country, my friends, where this is peculiarly and pre-eminently necessary, it is our own. In many other lands population is stationary, and to keep pace with the progress of society there, Christianity needs not so much *more* heralds, as *better* ones. It needs that the character of its ministers should rise, but not perhaps that their numbers should be increased. But in ours how different! Such is the progress of population here, that were every individual within our limits, supplied at this moment with the ministrations of religion —still unless these ministrations were multiplied, there would be little less than half a million destitute, before the end of one year. Our numbers double in twenty years; so that even to keep religion relatively stationary with us, to keep the ratio between our population and our churches merely unchanged, it is

requisite that the number of these churches, should double in the same term. Such however, is not the case; and the consequence is that we are now, and, since the formation of our Republic, uniformly have been, *declining* in religious resources. This is a fact, my brethren, which cannot be winked out of sight. It is a fact which meets us, whenever we turn to the newly peopled parts of our land. It speaks to us from extensive districts even of the oldest states.* It beams forth, from every page and line of the report which the President of your society gave us of his missionary tour.† Indeed the single fact, that in a territory where fifty years since there were scarcely four thousand souls, four millions have now started into being, and that of these 3-4ths at least are without the means of grace and salvation—this alone were sufficient to show how fearful has been, not the want merely, but the *declension* of religion in our land. And when to this fact we add the consideration that here there are no secular barriers to arrest this declension; no prescriptive influence to sustain or perpetuate religion; when we consider how heresies which nothing but argument can vanquish, are thriving at the West and South, with the most rank and fatal luxuriance; when, in fine, we remember that the hearts even of a whole people can easily wax gross, and their ears become dull of hearing, and that then all the efforts of benevolence to enlighten and reclaim them, must prove unavailing—at such a moment, we say, when christianity has so little power, and when even that power is in danger of being prostrated by the swelling tide of population, and the still more fearful torrent of corruption and sin, who shall wonder that we tremble for the spiritual destinies of our country? Is there no ground for apprehension? Is there no ground for apprehension, when the political ascend-

* It has been estimated, that 500 ministers are now wanting in the States of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and not less than 300 in New England. In the more southern States, the want is of course much greater.

† Rt. Rev. Dr Brownell. See the Report of his visit to the Western States, made at the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Dom. and For. Miss. Soc. of the P. E. Church, May, 1830.

ancy of our Republic is fast passing* into hands which feel not the restraints of christianity? Is there no ground for apprehension, when (unless new and more adequate efforts are made to avert such a catastrophe) the lapse of only half a century will find two-thirds of our whole population destitute of its institutions, and despising its authority? Is there no ground for apprehension when the very principles for which our forefathers toiled, the principles of civil religious liberty, the principles of order, intelligence and morality, are in danger of being extinguished by the spirit of licentiousness? Yes, my brethren, we do well to tremble. Now, if ever, there is need of vigorous and enlightened effort, in behalf of our country, and our Saviour. The call is from Heaven; the call is for servants of the living God; the call is for men of bold hearts and well-trained minds; for men fitted to cope with the subtle spirit of infidelity as well as with the reckless appetites for pleasure and for gold; for men who looking over vast fields already white unto the harvest, and seeing the demand for labourers, shall go like the Prophet, and say, here Lord are *we*, send us; for men in fine who with hearts knit together as the heart of one man shall breast themselves against the rising flood of ungodliness, which threatens to desolate the fair places of our heritage—who feeling that, if christianity must fall, it will be their highest honour to fall beneath its ruins—who prizing their Saviour above all price, holding substance, and fame, and even life, cheap when weighed against his cause, shall say with Thomas, *Let us go, that if need be we may die with him!*

The call, we say is for such men, and for many such. And this call, my brethren, addresses itself especially to us. We are members of a church which we profess to regard as the pillar and ground of the truth; a church possessing a divinely con-

* It has been ascertained, that more than half the whole number of ministers in the United States are in New England, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, while more than two thirds of the whole population are south and west of those States. It is obvious, therefore, that the numerical ascendancy is already with those who are, and long have been, destitute of Christian ministrations; and that this destitution is greatest where the population is most rapidly increasing.

stituted ministry, a scriptural and fervid liturgy, and articles of faith, conspicuous alike for their fulness and their simplicity; a church which taking its stand midway between the phrenzies of enthusiasm, and the languor of indifference, spreads out its goodly shadow, and invites all who are weary to come and be at rest. It is a church which breathes through all its institutions an earnest solicitude for the souls of men, and which, in the parent country, has ever been found foremost in bearing to those who are in darkness the light of Redemption. It is a church in fine, which is just emerging from the clouds of prejudice and hostility cast around it, partly by its own unfaithfulness, and partly by political events; which is fast becoming an object of good will to all parts of our land, and the ministrations of which are now called for, not only in the rising cities and villages of the West, but through many a district and in many a hamlet of this home of the Pilgrims. To us then as members of such a communion; urged by the double motive of love to our Master and devotion to our church; regarding the maintainance and diffusion of our sentiments not only as important, but as involving the very existence, in their integrity, of primitive truth and order—to us above all others this call of the text is addressed. Whom shall I send, and who will go for me, saith this voice of the Lord, to *us!* Where among *you*, are the gifted and pious youth, who will consecrate to this cause their rising energy and ambition? Where is the generous spirit of martyrdom which shrinks not from any sacrifice, which counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, which esteems no post too humble, no toil too severe, if through it, the cross may triumph and souls be saved? Where, O! where, within your pale is the goodly company of prophets, the heroic band of Apostles who will go forth in the spirit of Paul, and Peter, and Elijah; who will respond to every invitation, which is made for the services of their church; who will occupy each vacant point along the frontiers of Heathen dark-

ness; who in short will compass this whole earth in the length thereof, and in the breadth thereof, and never rest till on every mountain, and in every valley shall be found out a place for the temple of the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.

Brethren, the question is asked; and I cannot reflect without grief and humiliation, on the answer which must be made. This church, which numbers at present, about 500 congregations; which embraces a proportion of wealth and intelligence unusually large; and which is bent professedly on the propagation of her own tenets, yes this church with her primitive institutions, her evangelical liturgy, and her missionary spirit—is sending into the ranks of the christian ministry annually, but TWENTY-FOUR MEN.* Of these one half are requisite to supply the breaches occasioned by death, and other vicissitudes; so that to stem the mighty wave of population in our land, to contend with a growing and wide spread licentiousness, and to lift up the standard of Christ on Heathen shores, there remain but twelve, who are furnished and equipped by us. And these twelve, if we examine our ecclesiastical records will be found to be—not the sons of Episcopal parents, not youth originally intended and trained up for our ministry—but individuals who have been brought into our fold by the pressing demand for labourers which it exhibits, and who owe the adoption of our sentiments not so much to any influence exerted by us, as to their own free and voluntary choice.† The real truth then is, that as a church we barely rear ministers sufficient to keep our walls from dilapidation; that we do not even provide enough to extend these walls with the extension of population; that if they

* See the ordinations, reported in the Journals of the General Convention, for 1826 and 1829. See also, an article under date of Aug. 7th, 1830, in the Episcopal Watchman; the writer of which, though reasoning on different data, arrives at the same conclusion.

† It has been questioned whether this statement is authorized by facts. The author can only say, that it is authorized by such as are within the sphere of his own observation, and has not been thought exaggerated by several judicious friends whom he has consulted.

are thus extended we must ascribe it rather to the spontaneous aid of others than to our own exertions: while for the suffering cause of Christ in our own land, and the rescue of immortal souls in other lands, we do as a community, *absolutely nothing!* Yes, here is the spectacle of a church, boasting its primitive order, confident of its ultimate triumph over all other forms of christianity; a church which prays God to make his ways known upon earth, his saving health unto all nations, which teaches its members to ask daily that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may shine forth upon all lands, and that they who have received it may live as becomes it: and yet this church sits down in supineness; does nothing to achieve this triumph, for which it longs; does nothing to commend, or make known these institutions, of which it boasts; does nothing in fine to hasten on that kingdom of Christ, for which it so often and so earnestly prays.

My brethren, we speak here advisedly. We do not venture upon conjecture. We present you the result of a careful, and we believe an accurate examination. The question then arises "whence is this!" Whence is it, that we make no worthier response to the demands of our age, and the claims of our Saviour? Upon whom shall this delinquency be charged? We may, in reply to this question, implicate others, as we will. We may specify causes ever so many, or so various. We may complain that the rising generation is deficient in zeal. We may enumerate circumstances, which tend to divert our youth from the sacred profession. But never, my friends, shall we reach the true cause till we find it in ourselves; till we feel that to no little extent the guilt is our own, that the responsibility of such a failure rests on each individual of the church, and that it becomes each one therefore, in view of it, to confess that he has sinned, and come short of his duty. Yes, had each member of our communion cherished the spirit of Isaiah, had he been ready when the call came forth from God ambassdors for

to go in his name, to say, *here am I, send me, or send one whom I will help to train and equip for the high service;* had he felt as an individual, that he was a debtor to this cause, and that to the utmost of his ability he would discharge this debt, we should not be lamenting now, over facts so opprobrious. And though each one had not felt this, though thousands had continued inactive and indifferent as they now are; yet had *we* my brethren, (few though we be,) done our duty; had we added our exertions, to those which have been made by others in this behalf; had we devoted to this cause offerings proportioned to its magnitude, or to our own ability, who does not see that the result to day would have been less humiliating in fact, and unspeakably less painful to us. The cause of our deficiency, then must be sought in ourselves. It is idle to look for it elsewhere. It must be sought, in the want of proper attention on our part, to the religious culture of the young. It must be sought, in the absence of proper exertions to discover and train up for the sacred office, youth of piety and promise. It must be sought, finally, in the want of some organization by which in furthering this cause, exertion can be concentrated, and interest fostered.

I. It must be sought, *first in the want of due attention on our part to the religious culture of the young.* It were needless to maintain here, that as no man can be fitted for the sacred office without piety, so while destitute of piety, few will be tempted to enter it. In this country, it holds out no lure to avarice, and offers but few temptations to indolence or unholy ambition. Whatever therefore, affects the piety of the rising generation, must affect the number of candidates for the clerical profession. And it is here, if we mistake not, that you will find one great secret of that dearth of labourers, which you so loudly and deeply deplore. If parents had been faithful to their offspring; if the church had remembered, what it owes to those children, who have been taken into its arms, and have received its maternal blessing; and if sponsors had not neglected to put

these children in mind, what a solemn vow, promise and profession has been made in their name—in such case, I say there could have been no deficiency of labourers. Early impressions are controlling and permanent; and had these impressions been thoroughly religious; had the opening minds of our children been greeted with the lessons of Christian instruction; had they been taught what they owe to their Saviour, and to those for whom that Saviour died; had they in short, been made to know and to feel the dignity of going forth in the name of Christ, and diffusing the riches of his grace—it cannot be, my friends, that so many would have shrunk from this sacred and honorable service. It cannot be, but that multitudes would have been found eager for a place at the Holy Altar, and burning for permission to preach to perishing Pagans even, the gospel of peace. But as it is, who can wonder that churches languish, and the ways of Zion mourn? Do parents think it enough, that they carry their infant offspring to the font of Baptism; that they have them named in the name of Christ, and signed with the sign of his cross? Do they think it amply sufficient, if in addition to this they are "taught to say the creed, the Lord's prayer and the ten commandments;" are trained to repeat the shibboleth of party and to adhere with unfaltering pertinacity to the forms of their church? Are no pains taken to "instruct them sufficiently in the other parts of the church catechism, set forth for that purpose;" "to teach them all things which they ought to know and believe to their souls health;" and to make this teaching, practical in its influence and all-pervading and controlling in its power? Do *sponsors* forget that it is "their parts and duties, to see that these infants be taught so soon as they are able to learn" their high responsibilities and privileges; that they be shielded with tender and unremitting assiduity, from the snares and perils of this evil world; and that they be so virtuously brought up to lead a goodly and a Christian life, that when they are old, they shall not depart from it?* Yes, these adopted offspring of the

* See Baptismal Service for Children.

church, these members of Christ, and inheriters of the kingdom of Heaven, are they educated as children of the world, initiated into all its fashions, and perverted tastes, and given up to be votaries of its pleasures and its sordid ambition? Is there no earnest and persevering effort to root out from their infant minds the seeds of evil, and to imbue them with the affections and hopes of another, and a better world? Who then shall wonder, that so few of them are candidates for the ministry? Who shall wonder, that they shrink from the toil and self-denial of the *Missionary* life? And while these things continue, who can expect it to be otherwise? Brethren, we may found scholarships! We may rear Theological halls, and endow Theological professorships! We may sound aloud the wants of our church, and conjure young men, as they prize their religion, and compassionate the souls of sinful men, to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. But if they want the heart; if they have no real love for their Redeemer, or their fellow-men, who can hope that they will come—or who would prize them if they did? No! If we would lay the axe to the root of the tree; if we would begin at the beginning, and touch this evil at its source, we must turn to our *children*. It must be our hearts desire, and first prayer in their behalf to God, that they may be saved. We must feel that all other endowments are worthless, compared with that wisdom which cometh down from above! We must dedicate them from the womb, and with our whole souls, to God; take them early to Christ, that he may *touch* them with his transforming and renovating grace; and through the whole course of their education, we must remember that we are dealing with young immortals, that their home is in Heaven, and that it is in our power not only to train them for its felicities, but to make them instruments in the hands of the Spirit for turning many to righteousness. Yes, we must remember that in the judgment of the Bible and the church, the spiritual desti-

nies of the young are at our disposal, and that wo must betide the man who is unfaithful! We must begin with the first dawnings of intellect! We must labour that the earliest aspirations of the heart be devoted to the Lord and to his Christ! We must see to it that a hallowed and hallowing influence prevails in the nursery and parlour; that it goes forth with our children to the school and the play ground; and that it does not desert them when they enter the academy or the college. Here brethren, are the fountains whence must flow those streams, which are to make glad the city of our God. These fountains then, let us commend to the care of Almighty God. Oh, that he would cast salt into all their depths and recesses! Oh, that he would pour out a regenerating spirit upon all our seminaries of learning—making them places of prayer, and sanctifying them with the choisest influences of our Religion! Oh, that parents, and sponsors, and sunday school instructers might awake to a sense of their responsibilities; that Baptism might cease to be a form; that religious education, might become a reality rather than a name; and that each individual might resolve before God that the guilt shall not be his, if the rising generation are not all trained up in the the fear of God, and if multitudes of them are notmade meet and willing for the service of his altar.

II. But to be meet for this service, something more is requisite than piety. There must be *intellectual power;* the power which can result from nothing but the discipline of study, and the possession of learning. It was Paul, the most cultivated of all his Apostles, the only one who had been trained up at the feet of worldly science; that our Lord selected, even in an age of miracles, to bear his name before the Gentiles. It was Paul too, who writing to the ministry of his own time, declared that a Bishop should not be a novice; that he ought to give attendance to reading, meditate upon the things that he had heard, and give himself wholly to them. How obvious then, that in this age when the spirit of inspiration is sealed up, and when talent and learning are almost idolized, nothing can sustain the

pulpit but intellectual power. But from the discipline, by which such power is developed, many a youth of piety and genius is debarred. He burns perhaps with desire to be numbered among the sacramental host of God's elect; but he has been born and cradled in obscurity, and when he sees the difficulties which beset his way, his ardour is checked, his hopes expire. If ever he enters this host, if ever he is properly prepared to share in its labours, it must be owing to the aid and encouragement of others. As there can be no faith without hearing, and no hearing without a preacher, so in a thousand instances there can be no preacher without patronage, and christian liberality. At least one third of those who occupy the pulpits of our land, or quit its shores as heralds of light and salvation, are the offspring of such liberality. Yes, among the most eminent and useful of our clergy, are men who have felt the paralyzing weight of poverty, and who but for the voice of christian kindness and the offerings of Christian munificence, which cheered them on their way, would never have aspired to this office; or would have buried their aspirations in silence and despair. Now, is this a charity in behalf of which we make but little exertion? Are we at no pains to search out and bring forward youth who may become the ornament and support of the church? Do we look for our clergy to those classes of society, where the self-denying spirit of the ministry is, (alas that it should be so) the least fostered? Do we forget that it is as much our duty to aid youth in preparing for this service, as it is to sustain them when they enter it; that the same reasoning, which proves that no one anxious to preach the gospel and competent to the task, ought to be prevented by lack of support, proves also, that no talented and devoted youth, anxious to enter the sacred office ought to be debarred by the want of aid? Do we forget in short, that to enlist and train up soldiers of the cross, is an integral part of the *missionary* enterprize; that in doing this we are contributing as essentially to the extension of our faith as when we aid in support of Bible or Missionary societies; and in-

deed that in the present state of the church, it is a part of the enterprize without which all the rest must languish and fail. Brethren, so long as these obvious truths are forgotten, we need not wonder that though the harvest is great the labourers are few. We need not wonder, that demands which are made for the services of our church in every quarter of the land, are made in vain. We neglect the means, and how then can we hope to attain the end? We wait for young men to force their way to the portals of our ministry, when it is our duty to search them out, and guide them with a kind and friendly hand! We suffer many a child of promise in our Sunday Schools, and Bible classes, to be ensnared by temptation, or bound over to secular pursuits, when had we interposed, he might have become a burning and shining light in the sanctuary!

On this subject, however, I would not be mistaken. In recommending provisions for the education of indigent youth, I have in view no profuse and improvident expenditure—no expenditure, which, while it taxes heavily the treasury of the Lord, would hold out an unholy lure to the ministry. It is one of the blessings of our land, that the labours of the clergy meet here but a slender reward, and that they present, therefore, less than in other lands, inducements of a secular nature to those who undertake them. It is a blessing also, though not peculiar to our land, that many can enter this profession, only through the straight gate of toil and self-denial. Indigent in their circumstances; early called to struggle with opposition, and to combat perpetual and ever-varying difficulty; brought into intimate contact with minds of various texture, and habituated to constant excitement and collision, they acquire by such means an energy of purpose, a readiness of resource, and a knowledge of human character, which to the christian minister are invaluable. We deprecate therefore, any provisions which would supersede in their case, the necessity of such exertion. Instead of removing it from the poor, we would if possible impose it on the rich. We would

remove nothing, but the doubt and despondency which are apt to gather round the spirits of the indigent and unfriended. We would extend no aid, except for the purpose of teaching and enabling the student to sustain himself. We would provide, if possible, a system of self-support; a system in which the scholar shall render in manual or intellectual labour something like an equivalent for the assistance he receives; a system in which, uniting perpetual effort with rigid economy, he may foster the habits of industry and self-denial, so essential in a clergyman; may save himself from debt on the one hand, and from dependence on the other; may acquire or preserve physical vigour sufficient to encounter the toils of his profession; and may be prepared in every respect to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Such a system we rejoice to see, is finding its way into many of our schools and colleges; and we trust that the time is near, when the zeal and liberality of churchmen, will bring it to bear on the enterprize now before us.

III. It was my intention, to have dwelt at some length on the want of *associated effort* among us in behalf of this cause, as another reason why it thus languishes. This intention, however, I must relinquish. Time will only permit me to remark, that without such effort, neither piety in the rising generation, nor liberality on the part of our churches, can fully secure the wished for result. In great enterprizes, individual man is weak. It is not till associated with his fellows, that he becomes all but omnipotent. Resources, which if scattered abroad at the discretion of individuals, would be wasted, have only to be gathered into one channel, and moved by one impulse, to produce mighty and irresistable effect. Even, where deep interest has been awakened, this is true. How much more true is it where this interest is still to be aroused—where information is to be collected—where measures are to be devised, and the public mind guided to some fixed and useful result. It is in view of this fact that we hailed the formation of the Church Scholarship Society at first, and that we now rejoice in its extended and

extending prosperity. We trust that the zeal which inspires it will be caught by other districts of our country, and that the time is not distant, when every diocese will number among its institutions, one devoted to the same objects. And may we add the hope, that these will not be merely local associations, formed without respect to the general wants of the church, and for the narrow purpose of sectional advantage ; but that constituted on similar principles, and devoted to one great and common end, they will unite their movements, and operate under the patronage and supervision of the highest council of our church.

We have thus briefly adverted to the causes, or some of the causes, which prevent the increase of our ministry. These causes it is obvious, may all be resolved into the single one we have already named; the want, that is, of the spirit which animated the prophet, or the want, in other words, and to use the language of our day, of the true *Missionary spirit*. By such a spirit, I do not mean the miserable counterfeit which sometimes usurps its name. I do not mean the spirit of emulation, which impels a church to cultivate missions, on the same principle that the magicians of Egypt performed their miracles; merely because their rivals cultivate and profit by them. I do not mean the spirit of proselytism, which sends forth Missionaries to proclaim the dogmas of a sect, rather than to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. I do not mean, in fine, the enthusiasm, which taking its rise in the fervours of imagination, and fostered by the restlessness of the age in which we live, delights in vast and visionary schemes. No! when I name the Missionary spirit, I mean the pure and steady flame, which burned in the bosoms of a Peter, and a Paul; I mean that inextinguishable love of man, which has its rise in nothing but a paramount love for God ; I mean that benevolence, which called the Son of God from his throne of glory, and brought him to earth, to bleed and die, and which causes every heart in which it dwells, to melt with compassion over the woes and sins of alienated man. Such we trust is the spirit which begins to pervade and

animate our own church. If it is, if this zeal in behalf of missions of which we hear so much, has been kindled by the author of all grace; if it is sustained and nurtured on the part of those who profess it, by prayer, and by faith; then we bid it God speed. Let it be diffused throughout our borders, and it will not merely furnish funds to establish Missionary stations,—not merely raise the standard of piety among our people,—not merely infuse into the hearts of our youth an ambition to become soldiers of the cross,—but it will organize measures and supply funds to train this soldiery; it will enlist in its ranks many a hardy spirit who would otherwise have been lost, and it will never rest till a host has been enrolled, equal to all the demands of Christ, and all the exigencies of his church.

But how can this zeal be diffused through our borders, but by being first diffused through each individual heart? No man can be friendly to its extension, my brethren, who shuts it out from his own breast. No man can be sincerely anxious to see Missionaries go forth to distant lands, or to destitute portions of our own, who does nothing to prepare them for their labours. If we are in earnest in this cause, we must have done with sloth and prevarication. When called upon to labour in its behalf, we must not feign excuses of inability, or feel that since we are unable to do much, we need do nothing. We must not put in a plea that we are insignificant and useless—a plea which though it savours of humility is the real offspring of pride and indifference. No! let us feel our insignificance when we kneel before God in prayer; let us feel our insignificance when we presume to go forth to any duty in the spirit of self-dependence; but when we go forth relying on the grace of God to sustain and help us, then let us feel that we are mighty, that we can do all things through him, that strengtheneth us. Let us feel that so long as life is spared, we are bound to labour for the extension of the gospel; and if we cannot take an important part in this enter-

prize, let us imitate the sainted Elliot, who in the last hours of a most useful and noble life, when he could no longer labour in his accustomed vocation, was found teaching an Indian child its alphabet. Yes! let us be willing to occupy the humblest, meanest post, remembering that any service to our Master, is better than none, and remembering too, that on the fidelity with which the smallest trust is discharged may depend the fate of our cause. It was the maxim of a celebrated general of antiquity, that each soldier ought to regard himself in battle as important; as bearing in fact, its issue at his disposal. And it is a maxim, which in this age of the church, ought to be adopted by every christian. The standard which the captain of our salvation unfurls, and which marshal us on to conflict and to victory, bears an inscription similar to that which once sent enthusiasm through the hosts of a British fleet;—*The church expects every man to do his duty; every man*, no matter how lowly his rank, or scanty his resources. The eye of the Saviour is bent on each individual heart. No evasion, no indifference can escape his omniscient glance, or be erased from his indefectible memory. O brethren! as we would escape his anger, and secure that favor of his, which is life, and that loving kindness of his which is better than life, let us be faithful; let us be faithful even unto death. Let us think what we *ought* to do for him, who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. Let us think what we *might* do were we to retrench our superfluities, forego some of our indulgences and practice that self-denial which distinguished the first disciples of Christ. Let us think what we shall *wish* we had done, when we come to stand before God in judgment; and as the claims of the church, and the world come up before us; as we seem to hear that voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us," let the answer of the prophet break from our inmost hearts—Here Lord are *we*, *send us*.

SERMON III.

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CHARITY.

I CORINTHIANS, XIII. 13.

NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY, THESE THREE; BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY.

WHEN we consider what is said in many parts of the Scriptures, and especially in the writings of this Apostle of faith; how excellent in its nature, and how very essential to the christian character; how powerful to renew the heart, and overcome the world; what have been its glorious achievements; how many, through faith, "have subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises,—and out of weakness have been made strong;" when it is considered, that by faith we are justified, and accounted righteous before God, we may well, at the first thought, wonder that any virtue or grace—that even charity should be *greater*. But it should be also considered, that some things are highly important, and indispensably necessary, not so much for their own sake, or intrinsic worth, as for their fruits; or as the means of obtaining what is essentially and permanently good. In erecting a building, no part is more necessary than the scaffolding; and yet, no sooner is the edifice completed, than the scaffolding is useless. So it is with *faith* and *hope*; without faith, it is not possible to please God, or to be saved in Christ; without faith, the spiritual temple could

not be erected. Without hope, none would be strong to labor; the *hands would hang down*, and the *knees be feeble*. But charity is the strength and beauty of the edifice. By charity "all the building in Christ, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord," and "maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love." The superior excellence of this virtue, is every where seen in the word of God; but no where more clear and full than in this chapter before us.

In the chapter preceding, the Apostle had treated of the diversity of gifts bestowed upon the Church; and he exhorts christians earnestly to desire the best gifts; to seek and to pray for those most profitable. "And yet (in the last verse he adds) shew I unto you a more excellent way." He would shew what is more necessary and useful in christian life, than the gifts of which he had been discoursing. And the way he shews is worthy of this high praise; for it is to "follow after charity." Having shown that without charity, or, which is the same thing, christian love, all other gifts, and graces, and works will avail us nothing; having proved, from its nature and fruits, that it is pure and heavenly; and, also, that its continuance and its blessings are not confined to this present world, but will extend through the boundless ages of futurity, he comes to this conclusion: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." *These* THREE are what most essentially constitute the christian character. During this state of trial, and while God's Church is militant on earth, they must all *abide;* while the world continues will *these* remain, the most distinguishing characteristics of a christian disciple. Faith is the element of godliness,—the grand principle of spiritual life; it is "the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen." By faith we come to God through Christ. By faith the merits of his cross cleanse us from sin, and our religious performances are reckoned to us for righteousness. By faith, Christians "endure as seeing him who is invisible."

Hope is the comforting assurance that God's mercies in Jesus Christ are extended to us particularly; hope looks forward, through the eye of faith, to a glorious recompense of reward; to things—to joys and blessedness which human eye has not seen, and exceeding all that the heart can conceive, or the tongue express. It is by hope, that the faithful christian is enabled, as a good soldier of Christ, to endure a fight of afflictions, knowing that the greatest sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.

But charity is greater than either; charity is the image of God renewed in the heart; it is the perfect man,—the complete stature of the fulness of Christ. "God is love;" he that loveth is born of God, and doeth his will; love worketh no ill to man; it is the new commandment of Christ, and the fulfilling of the whole law. Charity is that holy, virtuous, heavenly principle, which the Gospel is intended to restore within us, and till we possess it, we cannot be truly christians. And that this charity or love is greater than faith, or hope, or any other gift, or grace, or virtue, the apostle makes evident; first, from its necessity to the christian character; secondly, from its good fruits; and lastly, from its durability. Let us, for our present improvement, view the course of his argument, and his manner of establishing this momentous doctrine.

I. How indispensably *necessary* charity is to the christian character, he has, briefly indeed, but very strongly, shown in the first three verses of this chapter: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,—" though a man were possessed of more than human eloquence; though he speak of God, and Christ, and religion, seemingly by inspiration, "and have not charity, he becomes as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal;" he is like the pipes of an organ, or other instrument of music, destitute of vital piety; they may utter sweet, harmonious sounds in the praise of God, but are themselves cold and insensible.

"And though a man have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge—" though he should study well, and commit to memory the whole sacred volume, and be ready and apt, on every occasion, to cite or explain the scriptures; give a man all the learning that schools and seminaries can bestow; let him be ever so deeply versed in abstruse science and systematic theology; "and though he have all faith, so that he can remove mountains"— though he have the most undoubting belief in divine revelation, and is able to work miracles, and in Christ's name to "cast out devils, and do many wonderful works;" yet if he "have not charity, he is nothing." His gifts are abused; his knowledge is vain; and his faith is dead, being alone.

And though he does works—even the greatest of works; "though he bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and give his body to be burned—" though he lay down his life,—suffer martyrdom for the sake of religion; if it be done from worldly motives; if he is liberal to please men, or gain applause; if he suffers death through obstinacy or pride; in a word, "if he have not charity it profiteth him nothing." Such works may be beneficial to mankind, and they who do them shall verily have the reward they seek for; but if these works are not wrought from benevolent principles,—if the heart is not influenced by the love of God, and good will towards men, in his sight they will not be approved; they avail nothing towards eternal life; they are not the works which have promise of "reward in heaven." And thus does the Apostle shew that the most splendid gifts,—the most shining graces, and the most popular works, without this heavenly principle of christian love, will be unprofitable.

II. Having thus shown the necessity of charity, he proceeds to its qualities; and as all virtues are best known by their *fruits*, in the next four verses he evinces the superior excellence of charity from its good effects. "Charity *suffereth long*." Patience is one of its distinguishing features. It bears pains with

fortitude; afflictions with submission; and injuries without resentment. It "is *kind;*" it has bowels of mercy; a tender sympathy for others; ever ready and glad to aid and oblige; it weeps with them that weep, and rejoices with those who rejoice. "Charity *envieth not;*" on the contrary, it promotes and rejoices in the good and prosperity of others. "It *vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.*" It thinks not of itself more highly than it ought to think, but is meek and humble, esteeming others better than itself. If a man has this love in his heart, no gifts, or talents, or attainments can elate him with pride, or make him vain; he despises no man, and yet he is a slave to no human opinion; he is content, if he can approve himself to God.

"Charity doth not behave itself *unseemly.*" It causes the Christian to pay all due regard to decency and appearances, lest its good should be evil spoken of. It corrects the manners, and regulates the whole deportment, according to what is fit and seemly in every state of life. It renders men affable and courteous in their intercourse, and preserves them from a thousand improprieties, to which pride, and selfishness, and other undisciplined passions subject men. For we are further taught that charity "*seeketh not its own,*" in such a way as willingly to disregard, and much less to injure the rights, or to diminish the happiness of other people. The christian rule is, "to love your neighbour as yourself, and to do to all men, as you would that they should do unto you;" and by the observance of this rule is charity distinguished. They who possess this love are "*not easily provoked.*" Though they live in this wicked world, where "it must needs be that offences come," and continually do come, they bear and forbear. Sensible of their own infirmities, and knowing that perfection belongs not to man, in this fallen state, they desire chiefly to cast out the beam from their own eye; they look to the example of their persecuted Saviour, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again;

when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously ;" like him, they endeavour to " overcome evil with good ;" they are more willing to forgive a wrong, than to avenge it.

" Charity *thinketh no evil ;*" it inclines the disciple of Christ to judge favorably of the deeds and the characters of men. It hopes to find, and inclines to believe that others are blameless ; and as far as truth will admit, imputes their conduct to good, rather than to evil motives. " It *rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.*" The heart which is ruled by this love is grieved by the prevalence of vice and sin ; it is glad when men do well, whether friends or foes. When piety or godliness increases, and when true religion is advanced, whoever may be the subjects of its power, or the instruments of its propagation, charity rejoices. In few words, love " beareth" or rather *covereth* " all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things," which a man, and which a christian ought to *conceal*, to *believe*, to *hope*, and to *endure*.

In this the Apostle's beautiful description of the fruits of charity, its nature and excellence, are evident. It is indeed not uncommon to give the name of charity to some one of its fruits or features. Almsgiving, for instance, is often honored with the name of charity, and no one deed can better deserve the name. But it is possible that a man may " give all his goods to feed the poor, and have not charity ;" not be possessed of this true christian love. This indeed is true, that as the Apostle says, " charity is kind ;" they who possess it will have pity upon the poor, and will, according as they are able, give to those who need. But it is not equally true that all who are liberal have charity : men may give bountifully from worldly motives.

So it is said that " charity thinketh no evil ;" but it does not follow that charity is blind : or that we have not charity for those whom we think to be faulty. You may not be deficient in charity towards one whom you think the worst of sinners, and a

profligate: his wickedness may be so evident that you cannot reasonably think otherwise of him,—if you wish him to be reformed and good and happy, and are ready to do your duty in promoting his welfare, this is to be charitable. And you may not have charity for one whom you think the best of men; you may envy his prosperity; you may wish him less perfect and rejoice in his disgrace. Charity is no respecter of persons; it is like the Divine love, extended to all. It has God himself for its primary object, and in imitation of His perfections, it embraces the whole human family; in imitation of Him who "makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends his rain upon the just and upon the unjust," charity inclines us to bless and do good to those who speak against and injure us; to "be perfect, even as our Father who is in heaven is perfect."

III. The Apostle having thus shewn the necessity and the excellent fruits of charity, proceeds to speak of its *duration*. "Charity never faileth;" in which it is greater than faith or hope, or any other spiritual gift: for "whether there be prophecies, they shall fail." Though now the Gospel is preached, and prophecies are explained and applied, the period is swiftly approaching, when this dispensation shall cease; every prophecy shall be accomplished, and every scripture fulfilled—"Whether there be tongues they shall cease;" all the gifts of miracles and inspiration shall be discontinued. In the glorified state of the Church there will be no confusion of speech or diversity of languages; but there shall be one heart, and one voice to all. "Whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away." All those various means and arts which now we use to discover truth and obtain knowledge, will give place to a glorious certainty, and the boasted wisdom of the world will be found foolishness and vanity. "For we know in part, and we prophecy in part." Very imperfect, and extremely limited are the views and the knowledge which at best we can obtain in this life. While we preach to you the unsearchable mysteries of God, we

must confess our ignorance of many things, and that all we now know is but very little in comparison of what shall in a future state appear. But charity is not thus fading and transitory; this *never faileth.* Other gifts and graces help our infirmities and supply our weakness; but charity is permanent.

St. Paul illustrates his subjects by the state of childhood. In that state we are captivated with toys and trifles; our desires and conversations are frivolous and unprofitable. But when we arrive at maturity of understanding, we are ashamed of these *childish things*, and we *put them away.* And this present life is the childhood of our existence; hereafter we shall be brought, by superior knowledge, to view as very trivial and vain, many of the things which now we highly prize; then shall we look back upon our highest attainments, in this world, as comparatively a state of ignorance and folly. But charity is still an exception; the same christian love which inspires the hearts of God's people, and unites them here in the bond of perfectness, shall still unite them in a better world. Here "we walk by *faith*, and not by sight;" but the time is approaching when "we shall know, even as we are known." Heavenly things we now contemplate and view with the eye of faith, as afar off, and we can only *hope* to enjoy them. This faith and this hope will pass away, and be swallowed up in knowledge and certainty; in heaven we shall "see face to face, and know even as also we are known." But no such change shall take place in regard to charity, which is, like the soul, immortal. This shall never fail. This divine principle, which gives peace on earth, shall with the soul be translated to its native skies, and constitute, no doubt, our chief felicity in heaven.

"Now then (most certainly) abideth faith, hope, charity; these three" virtues are in this life all essential to the christian character. Without *these*, we cannot live as christians, nor attain to immortal life. "But the greatest of these is charity." *The greatest*, because as we have seen, *the most necessary;* for this

the others are given; and without this they are nothing. *Greatest*, because in its nature and fruits it is of *superior excellence;* this more than all others promotes "glory to God on high, and on earth peace and good will towards men." *Greatest*, also, because most *durable*. Faith and hope will soon give place to certainty; but love will increase and shine forever. Love is the end and perfection of every virtue and grace. It is the point to which the others lead; the common centre in which they all unite. Even faith and hope are designed and above all things they tend to make us perfect in love; they are the sacred scaffolding, by which alone we can be built up a holy temple unto God, or be *edified in love*. This principle of charity was lost by sin; it is the image of God which is restored by the work of redemption. For this (by faith to renew our hearts in love) Christ lived, and for this he died. This did he teach in his preaching and ministry. This is the new commandment which he gives unto us, that we love one another; in this he sums up the law and the prophets, and shews that "the end of the commandment is charity." For what purpose do we *believe* in Christ rather than to follow the example of his benevolence? What is the end of our *hope*, but to be united with the whole universal Church in the holy exercise and perfect fruition of love? Faith and hope are chiefly profitable, as they lead to this blessed end. Here they *abide*, and here they ought to abide, firmly established in our hearts, till we have passed this vale of sorrows; till we attain to those blissful realms where love forever reigns. Here we cannot spiritually live without them. The one is the life, and the other the nourishment of our christian state. Faith keeps us in the right road, and hope strengthens us on the journey; but charity is the mantle which shields us from the storm, and the treasure which shall be our endless portion. All the doctrines and all the duties of religion, every commandment and every ordinance of the gospel, are intended, and they are calculated to inspire our hearts, and fill our souls with love; to eradicate every malev-

olent passion from our breasts; to banish hatred, strife and enmity from the world, and to cherish every friendly feeling, every benevolent affection, every kind and charitable office. As all the natural colors, blended together in due proportion, produce the purest white; so is charity a proportionate combination of every christian grace.

And what though the seed of the gospel does not always, though faithfully sown, produce this heavenly principle? What if kingdom still rise against kingdom, and nations called christian, engage in bloody conflict? Or if in smaller social circles the leaven of malice remain; if the storms of discord and contention overspread the horizon of domestic life; remember that these evils are not, as some would have it believed, owing to christianity, but to the want of it. The seed is good; but the soil needs cultivation; thorns and briers are permitted to grow and overtop the tender plants of charity. We need no other gospel; but too many need that which they profess. God gives us religion, as he gives the earth, that we should cultivate and make it fruitful. If it prove barren or unproductive, the fault is not in the gift: it is our own negligence and folly: we have the form without the power of godliness. While faith is dead, hope will languish, and charity will yield to selfishness and pride.

Let us then gladly and carefully attend to the apostle's inference, and "follow after charity," without which our gifts and talents and experience are nothing. Whatever men may claim or boast or think, by charity chiefly are we known to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

But though no gifts will avail us without charity, let it be well considered that many are necessary to our attaining it, and none more necessary than faith and hope. What can lay so sure a foundation of love;—what can so expand the heart with benevolence, as a belief in Christ,—what he has done—what he has suffered to save our souls? By the eye of faith do we behold him, for us men, and for our salvation, clothed in humanity, and an Advocate for sinners! Behold him continually exercised in deeds of benevolence and mercy! dispensing

the words of life: extending his healing hand, and life-giving power, now to the bodies, and now to the minds of men;—reproving the wicked,—reclaiming the wanderers; comforting the afflicted; giving sight to the blind, and binding up the broken heart. Whether we behold him in the desert, feeding thousands with a few loaves and fishes; or satisfying the hungry with the more excellent bread of eternal life; whether we see him riding triumphant amidst the joyful hosannas of surrounding multitudes, or expiring upon the cross amidst the scoffs of relentless persecutors, he still in every state—in every work—in every trial, exhibits uniformly the same unshaken friendship—the same unspeakable love for sinful man. And who that has eyes to see these Divine mercies displayed in the work of our redemption, will not—must not say, "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

And hope too must inspire us with the like sentiments of charity; hope which presents to our view an immortal crown of life and glory. In every state or change of life, hope elevates the soul above the powers of the world, and the fears of death. It administers to the afflicted the balm of comfort; it gives consolation to those who mourn in Zion, and tells the troubled soul that better things remain. While faith assures us that our love like our spirits shall be immortal, hope anticipates the joy. It looks forward to that blissful state where sorrows and strife and enmity shall be at an end; where the wicked shall cease from troubling; where nothing shall hurt or molest those who dwell in God's holy mount; where love shall flow in a pure unsullied stream from its celestial fountain. Charity thus founded on faith and hope, on the merits of Christ and the promises of God, "faileth not." Here we enjoy it as the solace of life, and the foretaste of heaven. Our present comforts of brotherly affection are a faint indeed, but a very pleasing earnest of immortal joys, and incite us to press on to higher degrees of benevolence and love. Our affections being thus drawn up to God, fall like the dew of heaven, and are dispensed like his bounty on all our fellow men, in an earnest desire to make them good and happy.

Charity raises the soul above the vanities of the world, the troubles of life and the fear of death. From Zion's mount, tranquil and at peace she surveys the changing scenes of this busy world, with no emotions but of pity and love. Securely fixed on safety's rock, she beholds, unmoved, the swelling storms of prejudice and passion, *like harmless thunders breaking at her feet.* Charity stands upon faith; on hope she reclines her head; her eyes are raised in smiling confidence to heaven; whilst her hands are diligently employed in deeds of kindness and love to mankind.

Let us then "follow after charity," as the essence and perfection of what is most desirable in life and religion. Let such love as the apostle has here described, be the Christian's constant aim. Let us endeavor to bring ourselves to the measure of this standard; let us cease not in our exertions, till our hearts and lives compare in every dimension: till we can *suffer long*, without murmuring, and *be kind* to those who are unkind to us: till detesting *envy*, we can rejoice in the happiness and prosperity of others: till we can demean ourselves with *meekness and humility* in every state and trial of life: till in all the intercourse of this world our whole deportment shall be so *seemly and decent*, that our good shall not be evil spoken of;—till we can regard the rights of our neighbors as we regard our own; and shall have obtained a perfect control of our passions under all possible provocations; till we are not inclined to *think evil* of other people; till we *rejoice not* in their *wicked conduct*, but *rejoice* always *in the truth*, even though our enemy should be the instrument of promoting it: till we can *bear all things* with patience, covering the faults of others; till we can *believe all things* that God has taught; *hope for all things* that he has promised, and "by patient continuance in well doing," *endure all things* which God in his wise and just providence shall call us to suffer. "He that *thus* endureth to the end shall be saved." When we have run our earthly course—when we have fulfilled God's purpose respecting us in this present world; faith and hope, which have been the sanctified instruments of our salva-

tion, shall be laid aside, as scaffolding no longer useful; the heavenly building, *fitly joined together and edified in love*, shall then appear in glory. Charity shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our heavenly Father;" as a sun which shall never set, and "shall never fail."

And unceasing praises for redeeming mercy, shall, by saints and angels, be rendered unto the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, forever and ever. AMEN.

SERMON IV.

BY THE REV. JOHN LAURIS BLAKE, A. M.
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THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

JOHN VIII. 12.

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD; HE THAT FOLLOWETH ME SHALL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS, BUT SHALL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE.

WHAT a cheerless, dismal place would be this earth without the illuminations of material light. Yonder sun has given life and joy, for nearly six thousand years, to the unnumbered worlds scattered through the immensity of space; and to the vast multitudes of creatures which dwell thereon! The light is indeed good! Without it, vegetable nature would lose its beauty, and decay. Without it, animal life, if for any considerable time sustained in being, could scarcely be reckoned of much value. Even in the short season of our night, so needful for rest and repose, a gloom and chill hang over us, like the shadows of the tomb! How inconceivable then would be the effect, if this darkness should be complete and perpetual!

From the incomparable beauty and excellence of light, in the material universe, whatever is highly beautiful or excellent in the moral world, is frequently called light also. Hence

the virtues and graces of the christian character are often represented under the similitude of light; a light, which the disciple of the cross is commanded to diffuse upon those around him, that God, by whose spirit these virtues and graces are produced, may be glorified! Our Saviour said to his followers—"Ye are the light of the world—a city set on an hill, which cannot be hid;" and he admonished them, saying, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may glorify your Father, who is in heaven." In the same manner of speaking, St. Paul said to the Thessalonians, "Ye are the children of the light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of the darkness." While, on the one hand, whatever is morally good, is called light; so, on the other, whatever is of a contrary character is called darkness. The Ephesians were exhorted to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but to reprove them. And it was afterwards said to them, "For we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." The same inspired writer comforted the Colossians, with the assurance that they had been delivered from the power of darkness, and thence translated into the kingdom of him, who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; and through whose blood they had redemption, and the forgiveness of sins.

Partly for reasons which have already been named, and partly for others, which will be mentioned, our Saviour is called the light of the world; and, in allusion to the natural sun, he is called the Sun of Righteousness, the brightness of whose beams can dispel the gloomy shades of death, and cause the eternal splendors of Jehovah's throne to shine through the darkness of the tomb. If we look at the moral state of the world, previous to the coming of our Saviour, and even to the present period, where his gospel is not known; and, especially if we contemplate the renovated existence, and the new hopes, of which the Christian is made to partake, in consequence of the divine mission of Jesus Christ on earth, we cannot fail to

acknowledge him to be the light of the world. It is proposed to consider further the appropriateness of this appellation, by bringing into view the analogy between the influence which he imparts to the moral world, and the influence exerted on the natural world, by the material sun.

In the first place, it may be remarked, that without the revelations of divine mercy, through the mission of Jesus Christ, we should be as desolate and dead to every spiritual delight, as would be the whole range of physical nature, to its own productions without the enlivening and invigorating beams of that luminary in the visible heavens! What would have been the condition of sinful and wretched man, had not the Sun of Righteousness, the Day-Spring from on high, imparted to us a knowledge of the means, by which we may be translated from the woes, that, to the eye of reason seem inseparable, from human existence; by which the purposes of heavenly grace will fill the soul with the assurance of a high and most glorious destination! Without Revelation, man might indeed speculate, and dream of an immortality beyond the grave; but, the spectres, fearful and appalling, of an annihilation would continually disquiet the imagination, and paralyze the best affections of the heart. To avoid apprehensions so unwelcome and withering to the most fond desires of the soul, we might fancy mutations in the modes of being, almost without number; but still, to the Christian alone is there a faith and a hope, adequate to our necessities. And, if it could be made certain to us, without revelation, that we are destined to an eternal existence, who could tell the nature of this existence? Who could tell whether the soul is to be purified and cleansed from the defilements of sin, or whether they are to remain forever, continually blackening, till there shall be no difference in depravity and guilt, between fallen men and fallen devils? Who could tell, whether the immortal spirit is to exist imprisoned in a polluted earthly form, or is to be emancipated, and permitted to range, in happy communion, with ethereal beings, throughout the universe of God, passing from

world to world, and from system to system, with the rapidity of electric fire, or with the greater rapidity of thought! The Bible alone can make known this mystery. And the Bible, my brethren, declares, that without the name of Christ, as a Mediator, there can be no deliverance from sin, and the curse denounced upon it! And by his mission upon earth, he not only destroyed the power and dominion of sin and death, but has restored man to the hopes of existence in God's own likeness and glory.

Thus, without the moral light of the gospel, man is destined to wander through a vale of misery; through a region and shadow of death; having no guide to lead him—no hope, on which to rest in the day of adversity and peril—no arm to hold him up, when sinking in the abyss of despair. As well might he pursue his journey to lands unknown, having no light, no director to mark his way; as well might the mariner pursue his path, across the wide ocean, to the desired haven, without the light of heaven to govern his course. Have you never felt your feet to wander from the right way? have you never stumbled upon difficulty and danger? have you never found your hopes to falter and fail, in the accomplishment of your wishes, if unaided by the glimmerings of day! And let me ask those of you, who have turned your meditations to the subject of religion, if you have been able, without the guidance of the scriptures, to arrive at any substantial conclusions. Let the word of revealed truth be dashed out of existence; let the expectations of immortality, raised in the soul by that word, be obliterated; let all the knowledge of the nature and destiny of man—of the introduction and reign of sin—of God, his attributes and purposes—of the invisible world, and the retributions of eternity, which we have acquired through the agency of that word—let it, at once, be completely extinguished; and, where, my brethren, shall we find ourselves! If you would know the state this would produce, cast your eyes in imagination, upon the moral desolations in heathen lands! See men bowing down to the works of their hands, in blind adoration! See them giv-

ing their life in sacrifice to a dumb idol! See them engaged in unholy and polluting rites. See them invoking the bright luminaries of the ethereal expanse! See them worshipping, in stupid mummery, the most loathsome and vile portions of the animal creation! Yes; see them do this, and you will have, pictured before you, what would be exhibited in our land, had the light of the gospel of salvation never shone upon it. The heathen world is now, what, it is to be presumed, we ourselves should be, were it not for the irradiations of divine truth, which shine upon the eye of faith, and lead us to realms on high.

Provided it should, by all, be admitted, that the gospel is thus efficacious in dispelling the uncertainty, the doubt, the darkness, the despair, that prevail in the world, where it gains an influence, it may still be objected, that the language of the text is not literally verified—that Christ is not the light of the world, as that language would indicate, inasmuch, as to a large portion of the world his name is still unknown; to a large portion of it, his messages of salvation have never been sent; upon a large portion of it, the influences of his grace have never descended. And, further, it may be objected, that even in Christian countries, thousands live without coming fully under the dominion of his spiritual kingdom. Such is the melancholy fact. It fills the soul of piety with deep-felt anguish, that so many, under the preaching of the gospel, are hearers of the word, and not doers of it; that so many are characterized by the seed in the parable, which fell by the way side, or on stony ground, or among thorns, and brought no fruit to perfection. We know that multitudes, as it were, yield only a partial submission to the requisitions of Christianity; and others hesitate not lightly to esteem the most endearing promises contained in it, as well as to despise and ridicule its most awful sanctions.

It may be, that those to whom I would, in this place, particularly address myself, will reply, that the light of truth has not, as yet, overshadowed them with such a perfect and irresistible splendor, as has been described; that, they are halting

as it were, between two opinions, till the power of it, as in the conversion of St. Paul, shall completely unnerve their physical energies. Alas, if you wait for this, it is to be apprehended, you will forever remain as you now are. The days of miracle are no more to return. God formerly spoke to his people in a manner so unequivocal, that no one could mistake his voice. The overwhelming deluge, the opening earth, the thunder and the lightning of Sinai, then bore testimony to his Divinity. At present he speaks in a more mild and *persuasive* manner. He now appeals to the more gentle emotions of the heart, instead of exciting your fears by the terrific exhibitions of his majesty. In waiting for some more overwhelming impressions in relation to the power of the gospel, in leading the soul captive to the will and command of Christ, you seem disposed to reverse the order of events, in the economy of salvation; you seem to expect seeing the effect, in the order of time, precede the cause. The promise in our text is—"He that followeth Christ, shall not see darkness, but shall have the light of life." It is, therefore, to those who follow him, that he will impart the light and the comfort of the gospel. To others the promise does not extend. It extends to his obedient and devoted disciples, and to none else. If you would know whether you have claim to this promise, say whether or not you are following him. To follow him in bodily presence, you cannot, for he is now in heaven. In being his disciples; in keeping his commands; is the only way in which you can follow him. Thus follow him, in sincerity and truth, and you shall not walk in darkness, but shall see the light of life. Nor is it to be supposed, that the keeping a part of his requirements and the neglect of the others, according to our several caprices, prejudices, or convenience, will be compliance with the obligations resting on us! A partial walking in the ways of religion may secure to us, for a time, a partial measure of the grace promised; but an unreserved devotion of ourselves will alone lead to a full fruition of the blessings of God's heavenly grace.

In reply to the objection, that may be made to our hypothesis, from the limited spread, which the gospel has already had among the nations of the earth, it may be remarked, that the prophecies which relate to the promulgation of Christianity did not contemplate a complete accomplishment, at once, of all that was intended. God, we are not to doubt, in a moment of time, might completely change the moral aspect of the world; might cause every idol, in heathen lands, to crumble into dust; might cause every vestige of unbelief among Pagans, Mahometans, Jews, and nominal Christians, to yield submissively to the impressions of revealed faith; might cause every knee to bow, in humble adoration, to the sceptre of the cross; might cause every tongue to unite in devout ascriptions to Jehovah's praise; and without any intervention of human agency, or adventitious means; but this is not the order of his government; this is not the mode of his operation, in the kingdom of grace any more than in the kingdom of nature. He works, in regularly constituted modes; the influences of his Spirit descend, in regularly appointed channels; the determinations of his will, in this glorious change, rise to entire completion, by progressive and orderly gradations. The empire of Immanuel, on earth, is a spiritual and a holy empire; resting, for a basis, on a complete subjection of all the moral and intellectual faculties of our nature. The subjects of this empire are willing, sincere, and obedient. Their allegiance is not the result of external and forced influence; but of an inward and voluntary surrender of the soul. And, on the other hand, the authority extended over this spiritual realm, is exercised in wisdom and parental kindness. The terrors of greatness, and of majesty, are exhibited to view, only when the gentle pursuasions of love are found unavailing. A dominion, composed of such elements, and governed upon such principles, is a spectacle of moral beauty and grandeur, no where else to be found, and which cannot fail to command the admiration of all holy beings.

Such a dominion, my beloved brethren, the Redeemer of man is establishing in the world. To us, it may appear a work

impracticable ; but, it is in the care of one, whose power is invincible, and who has declared, that not even the gates of hell shall prevail against his designs. The means may be apparently insufficient, but, in his hand, they will be omnipotent. The gospel is to be preached ultimately to every creature ; the heathen will be the trophies of his grace ; the ends of the earth will participate in his salvation. You and I may die before witnessing further progress in the accomplishment of redeeming love ; every herald of the cross now fighting the battles of the Lord of Sabaoth may sink under the weight of his toil, and descend into the grave ; but, others will be raised up to succeed them, even a great army, generation after generation, till the countless banners of pagan and infidel hosts, now raised with insulting mockery towards heaven, and the crescent of the prophet of Arabia, shall be cast at the feet of Him, to whom is to be given the kingdom, and the greatness of the dominion, and the power under the whole heaven.

Let us then, without delay, engage in the service of one whose power is to subdue every opposing obstacle; whose glory is spreading through the universe ; and whose grace is sufficient for every son and daughter of Adam. Nor should we fail to be co-workers in an enterprize of so much mercy. We cannot indeed follow the Saviour by the exercise of any miraculous power ; but, we can aid by a life of personal virtue and piety ; by a free support of Christian Institutions ; and by a ministration of charity among the children of want. The glory and renown attendant on such deeds will be greater than of the greatest conquerors that ever lived. The splendor and pomp connected with worldly greatness, is mere worthless show—empty as the wind—evanescent as the morning dew. But the glory of virtue and virtuous deeds, is imperishable as the divine nature. The man who builds his hopes on the promises of the gospel, builds upon an everlasting foundation ; " he shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

SERMON V.

BY THE REV. FREDERICK BEASLEY, D. D.
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ON KEEPING THE HEART.

PROVERBS IV. 23.

KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE; FOR OUT OF IT ARE THE ISSUES OF LIFE.

My Brethren: Almost all mankind, unless in youth their education has been extremely defective, enter upon the career of life with innocent intentions, and under the influence of honorable views. Depraved as is our nature, and prone to evil, there are scarcely any of us, who, in the outset, entertain criminal designs, or do not shrink with horror from the shame and ignominy in which vice involves its perpetrators. All the lessons which we imbibe from the dawn of reason, all the maxims of our own experience, all the force and authority of that example which is set us by the good, and all the sage precepts of moral science and religion, are calculated to imprint upon our minds a preference of virtue and a just abhorrence of vice. How happens it, then, that we so frequently find instances of those, who, in despite of the instructions of wisdom which have been instilled into them from early life, and of those awful examples of infamy and ruin which are presented to their view as the end of the guilty, fall from their first estate of innocence and purity, and become addicted to every species of crime? It is because they are not perpetually upon the watch, as their

moral and religious duty requires of them, against the subtle and insinuating nature of sin. This fatal enemy approaches them unperceived, overtakes and subdues them before they are aware. Now, it is the heart of man against which this enemy directs his first and most insidious attacks;—into this fountain of life he insensibly creeps, and, when once he has gained admission, diffuses through it his fatal poison. To guard this sacred fountain from pollution, therefore, should be the constant object of our vigilance and solicitude. My purpose, at this time, is simply to unfold to you the considerations implied in keeping the heart with all diligence; and under each point of light in which the subject is displayed, you will find, I trust, the motive presented by the wise man, pressed home upon the conscience, 'for out of it are the issues of life.'

Keeping the heart with all diligence, implies, that we should guard it from the intrusion of evil thoughts and purposes—from the rise and progress of criminal passions and desires—from its latent errors and delusions—from a corruption of its moral principles—and finally, from the decay and extinction of its religious sensibilities.

In the first place, keeping the heart with all diligence, implies, that we should guard it from the intrusion of evil thoughts and purposes. In one sense of the word, indeed, our thoughts cannot, in propriety of speech, be said to be subjected to our control. It is not in our power, during our waking hours, to determine whether we will think or not think. In spite of our volitions, thought will pass and repass through our minds in an uninterrupted series. The same law, no doubt, influences the finite orders of spirits above us. If it be not the essence, it is certainly the distinguishing property of the soul to think; and among all finite spirits, their ideas must continue to follow each other in regular and unbroken succession. It is the attribute of the Divine Mind alone, to whose view all things past, present and to come, are always immediately present, to have no change of objects presented to his perceptions, and no fleeting succession of his ideas. It is admitted, therefore, to be utterly be-

yond the power of any thinking being, subordinate to the Creator, to prevent himself from having a continued train of thoughts, during his moments of consciousness. Good and evil thoughts, of consequence, may pass and repass through the minds of angels as well as men, without sullying their celestial purity. At the same time, however, it is worth while to remark, that, although we are prohibited by the constitution of our nature from arresting the course of our own ideas, as much as we are from stopping the circulation of our blood, or any other function of our bodily system which is necessary for the support of life; nevertheless, we are invested with a privilege much more important to our well-being, and moral as well as intellectual improvement, the power of determining upon what objects of contemplation we will fix the attention of the mind and exhaust the sensibilities of the heart. Here, then, we perceive, is liberty allowed to mankind, and at this point should commence that constant vigilance over himself which the good man should exert in his own defence and security. Evil thoughts are enemies, against whose approaches and invasions he should sedulously guard the heart, the great citadel of moral and spiritual life. If once surrendered to these invaders, it will be gradually seduced from its allegiance to God and its devotion to duty. If it be not in our power to prevent the sudden and occasional intrusions of evil thoughts, we are not compelled by any necessity to allow them to dwell in that sacred retreat, or to foster and cherish them to our own contamination and final ruin. In this way only do we become criminal. And, my brethren, allow me to appeal to your own good sense and experience: Is there any mind, however pure and innocent, which would not be sullied by allowing its imagination habitually to float amidst schemes of fraud and villany, amidst impure images and the scenes of licentious pleasure? Would not the soul contract defilement, by coming frequently in contact with such polluting objects of contemplation? Out of the heart, we may be assured, are the issues of life. 'A good man,' says our Divine Master, 'out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth

that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' Again, says the same heavenly Instructer, 'out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.' The noblest virtues which adorn our species, as well as the darkest crimes which disgrace it, have their origin in this private recess. Is it not here that fraud and circumvention concert their nefarious plans, that dissimulation and hypocrisy conceal amidst shades of night their guilty views, that seduction conceives its mischievous purposes, that voluptuousness riots in unlawful pleasure, and that resentment and revenge whet their weapons of death? Sin must first be conceived in the heart, before it is brought forth into action upon the stage of life.

Now, what are those thoughts, against which we are required by our moral and religious duty, to be so sedulously upon the watch! They may be comprised under these divisions. Those ideas which lead to a disbelief of the existence of God and to misconceptions of his attributes—false views of his divine government, which give rise to distrust and murmurings, complaints and discontents, and, sometimes, even to revilings and blasphemies—incredulous conceptions about the character and offices of Christ, and of the pretensions of holy scripture to truth and divine authority—considerations which tend to weaken and impair our sense of obligation to duty, and to obliterate the impression of those laws of rectitude which God himself hath inscribed upon our nature—vain and fallacious imaginations in reference to the efficacy of prayer, and all the sacred offices and ordinances of religion; and, finally, the dark purposes of dishonesty, fraud, adultery, illicit pleasure, revenge and murder. Is it not evident, that frequent indulgence in ideas of this kind, must tend to soil the purity of our spirits, and to vitiate and harden the moral feelings? There are scarcely any of us, who do not, at first, look upon sin, under all its forms,

with displacency and abhorrence. The timid and scrupulous conscience of the truly virtuous, not only recoils with horror from more flagrant crimes, but has an instinctive repugnance to the slightest violations of rectitude, and to irregularities, indecencies or improprieties of behaviour. And yet such is the radical imperfection of our nature, and its extreme tendency to evil, that there is scarcely any one, however innocent may be his intentions at the commencement of his course, who may not so train his own thoughts, and discipline his mind in the school of vice, as to become capable of any enormity. In most persons, such apt pupils are we in this school, the transition from the evil imagination to the criminal purpose, and from the criminal purpose to the flagitious deed, is precipitate and fatal. When the guilty project first enters the mind, it is viewed with horror. Reason condemns it, conscience mutters her awful voice, and lifts her avenging scourge against it; while the path along which it leads is seen to terminate in a gulf of shame, misery, and ruin. At each moment, however, in which the sinner's mind broods over it, his inward horror of the act is abated; passion assumes the place of reason, and dims and obscures its sacred lights; the voice of conscience is drowned in the tumult; the sinner waxes bolder and bolder, until a fatal fatuity seizes him, he becomes entangled in the toils of Satan, and rushes blindfold to the perpetration of acts of the most desperate wickedness. By a process like this, most men advance from one stage of wickedness to another. No one leaps suddenly to the commission of very enormous vices. Men proceed, from step to step, in iniquity, subjected to perpetual checks from reason, conscience and a sense of shame, until, at length, disenthralling themselves from all restraints both of God and man, those enormous vices are engendered and nurtured in the heart, which become as red as crimson; and might "the multitudinous sea incarnadine." By what but a baleful process like this, suppose ye, could Cain have wrought his mind to such a pitch of phrensy as to imbrue his hands in his brother's blood? What but this, could have driven Absalom to treachery and rebellion

against his father; could have stimulated Herodias to the murder of John the Baptist, Hazael to the massacre of the Jews, or Judas to betray his Lord? Ah! my dear brethren, we know not the jeopardy into which we throw our happiness and peace, when we give evil thoughts admission to our hearts. They can never be indulged by us without imminent hazard, and may become the germs out of which spring those vices which sink us into shame, contempt and misery. Let us sedulously expel them, as the disturbers of our tranquillity, the seducers of our innocence, the taint of our moral purity, and the mildew falling upon our immortal hopes.

In the next place, the diligent keeping of the heart implies that we should preserve it from the rise and progress of criminal passions and desires.

So wisely is the whole system of human nature contrived by the Creator, that none of the principles, propensities, affections or passions can properly be said to be evil, in their original designation. Of the whole man, as constituted both of body and soul, when he rose a finished piece of workmanship under the hands of his supreme contriver, it might have been affirmed, as justly as of the frame of physical nature, 'God saw that it was good.' Evil, therefore, does not arise from the original construction of our nature, but from the excess, or defect, in our application of those powers and principles which are communicated to us. Hunger, thirst and our other corporeal appetites, are indispensable to the continuation of our present existence. And what would human life be without those affections and passions which, by their gentle agitations, preserve its waters from stagnation and putridity—as love, benevolence, humanity, sympathy, ambition to excel, desire of improving our condition, and all our social inclinations? And even those passions which are usually denominated malignant, tending to the injury of ourselves and others, as anger, wrath, resentment, indignation, as primarily incorporated into the texture of our mind, were not bestowed for purposes of annoyance and violence, but for purposes of defence, and as guards to protect us from wrong, in-

justice, oppression and cruelty. So admirably, therefore, is our entire frame organized, that when all our powers are made to act in concert and harmony, and the lower held in due subordination to the higher, and all of them controlled and regulated by the influences of the Divine Spirit, our peace, comfort and rational enjoyment are the ultimate result. The sinfulness of our nature consists in the powerful tendency of those principles which may lead to evil, to stimulate us to excess, and by this means destroy that equipoise of the mind, in which true virtue and happiness are found. We are not contented with the moderate gratification of hunger and thirst, for example, but are prone to fall into the excesses of gluttony, revelling and intoxication. A rational ambition to excel, does not satisfy our desires, even when we have attained objects adequate to our happiness; but our wishes grow by the aliment which feeds them. Thus an inordinate thirst of dominion, wealth, honor, and pre-eminence, springs up in the breasts of men, which occasions them to stickle at no expedients, however nefarious, to compass their ends; to seek their own gratification with an avidity that nothing can sate, and when supported by a power commensurate with their wishes, to spread conflagration through the world, and extinguish its embers in blood. It is the same with the other passions, which have so violent an impetus towards excess. In the pursuit of riches, when the desires are moderated and restrained, men are excited to honorable exertion to maintain themselves and families, and preserved from the baneful effects of indolence. But, in this case, also, avarice is apt to be engendered, and when this vice has taken possession of the soul, it expels the noblest virtues, and produces its debasing progeny, parsimony, niggardliness, insensibility, dishonesty, cozenage, fraud, a contempt of morals, an indifference to religion, and a love of money, which supplants in the bosom the love of God himself. 'Be ye angry, and sin not,' says the Apostle. Anger, resentment, indignation against vice, are virtuous principles and efforts of magnanimity, on some occasions, and when properly regulated and subdued. But when allow-

ed to degenerate into excess, what storms do they excite in the breast; what miseries do they inflict, both upon those who are subjected to their influence, and upon others against whom they direct their fury? The same may be said of envy and jealousy, which are abuses of the generous principle of emulation. They at once disquiet and torment the bosom of him who gives place to them, and produce the most mischievous effects upon society. Now, all these principles of our common nature, have their origin, grow to maturity and shoot forth into such wild excesses, in the heart. Should we not guard, with unceasing solicitude, that sacred seat from which they spring? In every instance, in which these criminal passions are indulged, the heart is vitiated in the process. To preserve its purity and singleness, we must observe their earliest tendencies to evil, and nip them in the bud.

And, my brethren, as a consideration which should rouse us to the most strenuous endeavors to the performance of our duty in this respect, is it not evident, as asserted by the inspired penman, that out of the heart, thus swayed by the benevolent affections, or actuated by lawless passions, are the issues of life? When love, sympathy, tenderness and brotherly kindness reign within us, what peace, comfort, contentment and joy do they transfuse through the mind, and communicate to all who come within the sphere of our social intercourse? On the contrary, when criminal passsions seize upon the soul, with what direful fury do they agitate and torment it? What desolation and ruin do they produce upon mankind! Gluttony and intemperance first sink their votaries into the deepest debasement, and then dig for them an untimely grave. To what bitter altercations, implacable feuds and inextinguishable heart-burnings, does avarice give rise? And are not envy, jealousy, inordinate ambition, illicit love, resentment and revenge, the principal actors in all those scenes of guilt, which history has recorded with horror, and which have furnished matter for the deepest tragedies? If the darkest crimes have their origin in evil thoughts, the passions are the baneful agents in their perpetration.

In the next place, the diligent keeping of the heart implies, that we should detect and expose to itself its latent errors and delusions. To obtain an accurate knowledge of ourselves, and our real character, has always been allowed, by the wisest men, to be a most difficult acquisition. Self-love is a great, and, sometimes, fatal deceiver. Hence it is that sin finds us so vulnerable, and so easily vanquished under his insidious attacks. Self-love causes us to view the virtues and vices through a discolored medium, and thus either confounds them together, or does not nicely discriminate the shades that separate them. Viewed through this medium, vices are stripped of their deformity, or made to assume the guise and lineaments of virtue. Pride, arrogance and superciliousness, are thus converted into a becoming self-respect and dignity of manners; prodigality and wasteful profusion, into generosity and liberality of spirit; parsimony and rank avarice, into a prudent economy; dissimulation, deceit and a dark hypocrisy, into politeness and urbanity of deportment, uncommon penetration, and a knowledge of the world. Under the influence of this self-delusion, the unprincipled defrauder, or extortioner, who avails himself of every opportunity to overreach a neighbor, or exact of him an unjust demand, alleviates the offence to his conscience, by alleging that he is only conforming to the customs of the world: while the foul-mouthed blasphemer, and obscene jester, who soil at every word the spotless majesty of heaven, and wound the ear of modesty with impure allusions, are willing to believe that their feelings remain untainted, and they have a good heart; as if a polluted stream could ever issue from a pure fountain. The man who has thrown off the fear of God, and all religious impressions, gratulates himself that he is no dissembler or hypocrite. The mere form a list in religion, who utters the language of devotion, while his heart is untouched with its sacred fires, that he is no fanatic, and makes no professions in which he is not sincere: while the wild enthusiast, by his sudden ecstacies and occasional raptures of devotion, expects to make amends to Heaven for his want of the steady habits of a virtuous and

pious life ; that kind of life, which, like a ' shining light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' In short, the most atrocious vices, are not without their pretexts and extenuations also. Slander and defamation are only an innocent play upon the foibles and imperfections of others, while the basest seductions of innocence, and dissoluteness of morals, are pardonable failings, or excesses not to be scanned with too severe an eye. Nay, to such an extremity do mankind proceed in palliating to their consciences the most glaring violations of the pure and holy law of God, that even the unnatural suicide and wilful murderer are not left without excuse. The one, when he does violence to nature, and tramples upon that law which nature's God has written in his bosom, does injury to no one, and only exercises an undoubted right. The other, when he enlists in those fashionable butcheries, denominated duels, in which human victims are immolated according to established rites, to the sanguinary demon of revenge, the Moloch of modern times, he is only acting upon the point of honor, and seeking a reparation of injuries, or satisfaction for an affront. O sinners ! and is God a man, that he should be deceived by false pretences, or the son of man, that he should repent, and allow his law to be disannulled by the vague interpretations and deceptive glosses of your passions ? Hath he said, that at the day of final account, the secrets of your hearts shall be disclosed, and every covering of sin removed, and shall he not execute his words, and bring you to a fearful retribution ?

Nor, my brethren, do the self-delusions of mankind cease with the detail of their moral duties. In the affairs of their salvation, they are equally numerous, and equally fatal to their everlasting peace. Could we throw off the veil with which they conceal their iniquities from their own view, the whole purpose of our ministry would be accomplished ; they would abhor themselves, like holy Job, and repent in dust and ashes. Are there none among you who are present, who are conscious that your peace is not made with God ; that you have no effectual interests in a Saviour's merits, and that your happiness

through eternity is not secured? And could you remain in a state of rest and tranquillity, while thus circumstanced, were you not deceived by some fatal misconception of your real situation? In order that you should leave at hazard such infinitely important concerns, must you not impose upon your understandings by fallacious views of your duty and interest, and deceive your hearts by visionary hopes? There is not one of us, who does not believe that he shall be happy at his departure from the present life. The idea of being consigned, at death, to future wretchedness, when feelingly brought home to our bosoms, would be insupportable to us all. And yet, let us put the inquiry; upon what ground do you rest this hope of future happiness, to which the hearts of all mankind so fondly cling? Have you complied with the conditions which are represented in Scripture, as indispensable to your salvation? A few only can give place to an humble trust that they have done so, while a large proportion of you would not presume to lay claim to any such pretensions. Upon what then do you rest your hopes of acceptance with God; or your present peace and tranquillity, while in a state of insubmission to his law? Perhaps upon some vague ideas of the divine benevolence and mercy, which will not be so strict as some suppose, in scrutinizing your motives and conduct, and punishing your iniquities; upon the general uprightness and integrity of your conduct, although it be not exactly conformed to the precepts of the gospel; upon your resolutions of future amendment and entire obedience; perhaps upon the principles of unbelief, rejecting the claims of your Saviour, and the evidence of revelation, and seeking relief from your apprehensions about futurity in the gloomy prospect of an utter extinction of being. These, and others, similar to these, are the secret errors and illusions which superinduce upon mankind either a portentous indifference and apathy, or a profound and deadly sleep in the matter of their salvation. O fatal errors! O deluded Christians! And can nothing arouse you from this death-like slumber? Can neither the dictates of right reason, nor the monitions of conscience,

nor the sacred movements of the Holy Spirit, nor the evidence and power of divine truth, nor the warnings which come to you from the beds of languishment and death, nor the awful thunders of the gospel, awake you to a sense of duty, and quicken your exertions to work out your salvation?

My brethren, let us awake from our fatal security in sin, and expel from our hearts all those fallacious dreams, which are deluding us to our present and final ruin. Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light! The Christian who has imbibed the genuine spirit of devotion, instead of endeavoring to extenuate or justify his transgressions, views them in their native deformity, and in their whole contrariety to the law of God. The familiar language of his soul, in its intercourse with Heaven, is that of the pious Psalmist—'Try me, O God! and seek the ground of my heart: prove me, and examine my thoughts! Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' He is deeply sensible of that profound abyss of guilt and misery which is presented to him in his own nature, and which nothing but the searchings of the Divine Spirit of grace can penetrate and purify. He is humbled to the dust, under a conviction of his unworthiness, in the presence of God and at the footstool of his Saviour. He reposes all his trust and confidence in God, knowing that he careth for him, and that his compassions fail not. Let us, then, my brethren, in obedience to the admonitions of the Divine Spirit, keep incessant watch over our own hearts, excluding from them all evil thoughts, detecting and rectifying all fatal errors and misconceptions of duty, regulating and subduing our inordinate passions and desires, and subjecting our whole man to the peaceful sway of the blessed Spirit of grace. Let us not only abstain from all presumptuous sins, but endeavor to cleanse our consciences from our secret faults. Let us bear deeply impressed upon our minds the important consideration that on the great day of account God shall bring to light 'every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.'

SERMON VI.

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SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

PROVERBS IV. 23.

KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE; FOR OUT OF IT ARE THE ISSUES OF LIFE.

My Brethren: in discoursing upon this subject, I undertook, upon a former occasion, simply to determine what is implied in the diligent keeping of the heart. I have said that it implies, we should guard it from the intrusion of evil thoughts and purposes; from the rise and progress of criminal passions and desires; from its latent errors and delusions; from a corruption of its moral principles, and, finally, from the decay and extinction of its religious sensibilities. I have already descanted upon the three first considerations.

In the next place, the diligent keeping of the heart implies that we should preserve the purity of its moral principles. When a man's principles of morals have become completely vitiated and corrupted, his condition is desperate and deplorable in the extreme. He has now lost irretrievably the esteem and confidence of others, and can engage in no useful occupation. If he be possessed of wealth, he spends his time in solitary splendor, the objectof scorn and disgust to all, and tormented by an evil conscience; if poor, he seeks his support by dishonest shifts and contrivances, or by criminal depredations upon the

property of others. In either case, his life is forever imbittered by the consciousness of shame and disgrace. Now this utter debasement and wretchedness of mankind is not the product of a moment, but the slow result of steady causes operating upon the mind. The heart has been thus radically corrupted, by the indulgence of evil thoughts, by giving way to the impulse of disorderly passions, and by extenuating to itself the guilt of individual acts of immorality. By a gradual process of this nature, our moral characters are blasted, and our principles of probity sapped. Should we not, then, watch with unwearied diligence and the most searching scrutiny the heart, by whose agency these fatal changes are effected? In this respect, too, may it be justly and emphatically pronounced, that out of it are the issues of life. Without the prevalence of good principles, that mutual confidence among men, which is the very bond of social order, would be unloosed, and the whole machinery of society must stop its action;—every member of the community, therefore, however humble or elevated his station, should consider himself bound by the most forcible obligations to pay a scrupulous attention to the rules of probity and honor. The instructions of the wise man, upon this point, are beautifully conveyed in the maxims which immediately succeed our text—'Let thine eye,' says he, 'look right on, and thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the paths of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.'

To preserve firm and steady principles of duty, and an incorruptible integrity, amidst the temptations of the world, the vicissitudes of life, and all the revolutions of fortune to which we are exposed, is one of the most delicate and arduous parts of virtue; it requires a constancy of mind and stability of character, which are properties only of a few. How large a portion of our fellow men, after having been carefully nurtured in the doctrines and precepts of the faith, let go their integrity upon the first shock of temptation! They exhibit new features of character, accordingly as they are called forth by times and

circumstances, and are ever ready to accommodate their principles and conduct to what appear to be the pressing interests and exigencies of the moment. It has become quite an apothegm in colloquial intercourse, although it implies a pungent sarcasm upon our race, and is a lamentable truth, as it regards its moral import, that the characters of men become changed by a change of circumstances. How few are there, so impenetrably cased in their integrity, and so firmly purposed to do their duty to the utmost, that neither trials nor temptations, neither prosperities nor adversities, neither poverty nor riches, neither dignities and honors, nor shame, reproach and contumely, neither caresses nor persecutions, neither life nor death, can induce them to swerve from the dictates of reason and conscience, or depart from the path of perfect rectitude? And yet, my brethren, should we anticipate that the most rigid adherence to morals, and scrupulous attention to the minutest points of duty, would be wanting in a society professing to be Christian, and imbibing from their cradle the pure milk of the revealed word of God? In no matters are the precepts of the Gospel more clear, precise and imperative, and its awful sanctions, as motives to obedience, more cogently urged upon the understanding and the feelings, than in those of our moral duties. While it exacts of its possessors, under its highest penalties, universal holiness of life and conversation, it penetrates and searches, by its wholesome influence, the springs of action in the heart. Requiring the utmost purity of intention and scrupulosity of conscience, it first restrains from injury and wrong, and then generates in the bosom every generous purpose, every refined and noble sentiment, and prompts to the display of every manly virtue. Are you a Christian? Then you should be just, humane, tender-hearted, chaste, disinterested, gentle, humble, temperate in all things, active in doing good, prudent, discreet, self-denying, and heavenly-minded. All that the philosophers have taught in their schools, or exhibited in the character of their imaginary just man, Christ has imposed upon his followers, while, at the same time, he has wrought up their virtue to

still higher perfection, by referring them to the will of God as their rule of duty, to the purification of their hearts as the means of holiness, and to a tender love of mankind together with the prospect of everlasting happiness as its motives. The whole tendency of our religion, when its genuine and not feigned influences are felt, and, at the same time, one of its most happy and sublime effects, is to create in the mind a delicate and tender conscience, and an acute religious sensibility, which occasion us to recoil with repugnance and disgust, from any act which is incompatible with that holy law which is a lamp to our feet, which would cast an imputation upon our Christian character, offend our God, or bring into disrepute and disparagement the faith which we espouse. The Christian, upon whose heart and affections our religion has wrought its perfect work, may boldly be pronounced a real model of that imaginary just man, whom the ancient writers delighted to portray; a model, however, finished with finer touches of humanity, adorned with more gentle and attractive graces, and into which the Divine Artist has breathed the spirit and temperament of Heaven.

Vain, therefore, my brethren, are the loudest professions which we may make to piety, the austerity of our manners, apparent sanctity of our demeanor, and all the outward symptoms of penitence and devotion, if we 'bring not forth fruits meet for repentance;' and don ot discover, in our intercourse with men, unsullied purity of conscience and the most scrupulous integrity. The sincerity of our faith, according to the view of our Divine Master, must be proved by our works. Shall he dare lay claim to the honors and rewards of a Christian who fails in keeping the commandments of God, or who, under any circumstances, can be tempted to a dishonest ordishonorable act, in order to raise a fortune for himself, to save from ruin that which is tottering, or for any other imaginary purpose? As soon may Christ be made to accord with Belial, or the service of God with that of the unrighteous mammon. Our religion indignantly repudiates the pretensions of such apostate disciples. Her language is 'whatsoever things are honest,

whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think of these things.'

Finally, it is essential to the diligent keeping of the heart, that we preserve, in wholesome and lively exercise, our religious affections. The fear of God is not only the beginning of knowledge, as is asserted by the wise man, but it is also the only stable foundation of virtue. Religion and morality are twin-sisters in the heart of man, and are born, live and die together. Was there ever any one, who, as soon as he found himself beginning to become a sceptic in the doctrines of Christianity, did not also perceive that his sense of moral obligation was declining? If some enemies of the faith, from a happiness of natural constitution, or from a strong regard to their reputation in the world, have been withheld from scandalous vices, and even displayed amiable qualities and undoubted probity, not an instance can be given of one who has discovered, both in his doctrine and example, a delicate and scrupulous attention to the whole circle of his moral duties. The fact is, that hostility to those restraints which are imposed upon the passions by the christian religion, is the most productive cause of a disbelief of its doctrines; young persons, more especially, if they will be attentive to the secret operations of their own minds, will perceive that the irregularities of their conduct were coeval with the decline of religious sensibility. When they cease to be strictly pure and exemplary in their manners, they cease to believe; and when they cease to believe, their hearts are corrupted, and they become vicious. How inestimable, then, is the operation of religious principle upon the minds of men, and especially upon the affections and passions of the young! It is like a refiner's fire and fuller's soap, cleansing, invigorating and purifying the whole system of human nature. When all its divine influences are shed abroad in that corrupt and turbid fountain, the heart of man, they are like the tree which Moses cast into the waters of Marah, or like the angel which descended into the pool of Bethesda, and commu-

nicated to that stream its healing efficacy. Never, therefore, my brethren, let the fallacious idea get possession of your minds, that you can practise a perfect morality, and so comport yourselves as to be acceptable to God, without the aid of religious belief or of devotional feelings: this is a maxim of the passions, or of a misguided reason, and is not true. Religious feeling, and an efficacious sense of moral duty, are so intimately blended and kneaded together in our constitution by the Creator, that the one cannot subsist in full vigor, and perform its appointed office, without the aid and co-operation of the other. The character of the greatest and most estimable man that ever lived, would be imperfect, if it wanted the finishing touches of piety towards God, which communicate to it its highest ornaments and most attractive graces. What but the influence of that Divine Spirit which is obtained by faith, penitence and prayer, can renew our depraved nature, control our unruly wills and affections, and lead us steadily and surely in the way of uprightness? When, like the prodigal son, smitten with a sense of our sin and misery, we have appealed to our Heavenly Father for forgiveness, and unburthened our sacred sorrows at the foot of the cross,—we feel ourselves constrained to duty by more tender motives, and a new train of ideas and affections take possession of the soul, and nobler and more elevated prospects are opened to our view. My brethren, the inward feelings and outward exercises of devotion, are indispensably necessary to sustain the feebleness of our nature, quell the turbulence of the passions, cleanse the mind from the impurities of sensual desire, and keep alive within us that holy zeal which alone can render the yoke of the divine law easy and its burthen light. Who does not feel, after the exercises of sacred meditation, of public and private prayer, of an attendance at the holy table, and all the various offices of devotion, that his repugnance to sin is augmented, his love of holiness revived, his resolutions of duty strengthened, the force of temptation abated, his passions and desires purified and refined, and a sacred tranquillity and joy pervading his mind? If you wish, therefore, to preserve your-

selves from the several vices and all their dreadful consequences, to cultivate and bring to perfection within yourselves the moral virtues and graces, and, in a word, to attain to that perfection in holiness which shall assimilate you to God, and fit you for the enjoyment of the bliss of heaven, keep your pious feelings, by every practicable expedient, in a state of lively and vigorous excitement.

And now, my brethren, having attempted to explain to you what is implied in the vigilant keeping of the heart, and the incalculable importance of attending to this injunction of the wise man, allow me to inquire, in drawing the subject to a conclusion, Are you conscious that you have devoted such a degree of attention and anxiety to this matter, as are exacted of you by a regard to your own interest and the word of God? Although you may have been restrained by numberless considerations, from the commission of presumptuous sins, yet, are you assured that you have been cleansed from all secret faults, which sully you in the sight of God? Have you sedulously expelled from your minds all evil thoughts, restrained and regulated your unruly passions, detected and rectified those errors and delusions which might blind your understandings and lead you into guilt; contracted settled principles of virtue, and nurtured by every means within your power your devotional sentiments? In short, do you sincerely believe that your hearts are, at this moment, right in the sight of God, and should their whole state be unveiled to his searching eye, you would meet with his pardon and grace? If you are unable to answer these interrogatories to your own satisfaction, let me entreat you to enter promptly upon the task of preparing yourselves to do so. Do you ask me by what means you shall be able to comply with the duty of preserving your hearts from all impurity? The reply is easy and satisfactory: Never allow yourselves to think any evil—pay a strict attention to all the scruples and monitions of conscience, avoid the first approaches of sin, and the sudden impulses of the passions, hold frequent communion with your own spirits, and subject yourselves to the test of frequent

self-examinations. Nor is this all. If you would have a conscience void of offence both towards God and man, avoid all communication with unworthy and licentious companions, and seek intercourse only with the good; abstain from the perusal of indecent and immoral works, and devote your leisure hours to the reading of the sacred scriptures, and of all those authors who will at once enlighten your understandings, improve your moral feelings, and warm your hearts with the sentiments of piety and virtue; and, finally, practise all the duties of a holy life.

And, my brethren, need I urge upon you any other motives than those which must have been suggested to your own minds, during the elucidation of this topic, to induce you to exert incessant vigilance over your hearts? If the ancient sages, in quest of what they estimated the supreme good in this world, subjected their affections and passions to such a rigid discipline, submitted to so many privations, and encountered all evils with fortitude and magnanimity, shall we regard it as an effort above the flight of Christian virtue to subject ourselves to similar restraints, and exhibit the same self-control, to attain that exalted reward which awaits us in a future life? They were in pursuit of an earthly recompense; we aim at one which is heavenly. 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' says our Divine Master, 'for they shall see God.' Sincerity and singleness of heart will form our best recommendation at the bar of heaven. If upon the great day of final account the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and upon that disclosure will be founded the sentence which shall determine their everlasting destiny, surely we shall not escape the tremendous doom of the guilty, and cannot expect to ascend to the realms of celestial purity and bliss, unless we have previously undergone that complete purification of the spirit which shall fit us for the enjoyment which is found within them.

SERMON VII.

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THE ADVANTAGES OF PRAYER.

JOB XXI. 15.

WHAT IS THE ALMIGHTY, THAT WE SHOULD SERVE HIM? AND WHAT PROFIT SHOULD WE HAVE, IF WE PRAY UNTO HIM?

THESE words, my brethren, are put into the mouth of a wicked and irreligious person by the Arabian patriarch, in one of the conferences which he held with his friends, when suffering under the pressure of severe affliction. The ungodly man is represented as asking, in a scoffing tone, '*What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?*' It is not, indeed, very surprising, that they who are wholly immersed in worldly concerns, should indulge the impious imagination implied in this interrogatory form of speech; but the advantages of prayer to those who look beyond the present transitory scene, will appear to be inestimable. Let us then consider some of these advantages, that we may be more incited to the practice of a duty, the due performance of which is one of the highest privileges of an intelligent and accountable being.

Man is a weak and dependent creature. He was brought into the world by the will of his great and beneficent Creator. He draws not a breath but by the permission of the God who made him. He can neither 'will nor do,' independent of 'his

good pleasure.' It is therefore, of unspeakable importance to acquire the favor of this Almighty Being. Now prayer is represented in the holy scriptures as one of the principal conditions, on which we may hope to secure this invaluable benefit; which, indeed, may be said to include all others; for 'in his favor is life,' and 'his loving kindness is better than life.' I will not multiply quotations from the inspired penmen, as passages to this effect will readily suggest themselves to those who are at all conversant with the sacred writings. One or two only will be repeated. 'Ask,' says our Saviour, 'and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be open, unto you.' 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?' Prayer, then, is the medium, by which we are taught to expect those things, which are necessary to our well-being, both in time and eternity. In proportion, therefore, as it is desirable that we should possess them, it must be a beneficial exercise to approach the Almighty in acts of supplication for his mercies, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature. When, indeed, we duly consider the importance of our relation to the Supreme Being, as the author of our present enjoyments, and the foundation of our future hopes; when we reflect, that, as rational and immortal beings, this relation can never be dissolved, and that prayer is the appointed method by which we hold communion with the Deity, we cannot, as I have already remarked, but esteem the privilege of addressing this great and glorious Being, as one of the most distinguished which we can possibly enjoy. 'Is any one afflicted?' says St. James, 'let him pray,' and the oil of divine consolation may be poured into his wounded bosom. Does his heart bleed with anguish, and are his eyes suffused with tears, on the death of one, who was near and dear to him? Has he consigned to the tomb an amiable child, in whose life his own, like that of the patriarch, was 'bound up,' or a venerated father, on whose counsels he leaned, and by whose paternal consolations his sorrows were soothed, and his burdens alleviated;

or a tender mother, who instilled the earliest lessons of moral and religious truth into his opening and susceptible mind, whose untiring assiduities were never wanting to him, when languishing on the couch of pain and sickness, and to whom he was only doubly dear, when oppressed with calamity, or deserted by the world? Does he lament a departed sister, whose pure and disinterested affection no misconduct could alienate, and no circumstance change; or a brother who shared his youthful sports, and was the familiar companion of his maturer years? Has he committed to the dust, the remains of the beloved partner of his life, who heightened all his joys, and participated, with endearing sympathy, in all his griefs and troubles; or followed to his 'long home' a kind and faithful friend,to whom his most private thoughts were freely imparted, and whose cheerful and instructive conversation often refreshed and enlivened his sinking spirits, when spent with toil, or saddened by disappointment? When mourning under such melancholy bereavements, let him pour out his sorrows at the footstool of his heavenly Father, 'who does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men,' and he may rise from his devotions with a less burdened heart. Hope may revisit his soul, and suggest the delightful prospect of a happy re-union with his departed friends and relatives, in a more perfect and enduring state of existence. Have we experienced unkindness or treachery from one whom we supposed to be our friend? Our injured feelings may be soothed, by addressing in prayer that gracious and unchangeable Being, who 'will never leave nor forsake' those who put their trust in Him. Has poverty 'like an armed man' approached the habitation which was once the abode of wealth or competence? Its disconsolate inmates may experience an alleviation of their distress, by looking up to the God and Father of that Saviour, who, when on earth, 'had not where to lay his head.' It may be suggested to their minds, that their earthly treasures are taken from them, only to render them more sensible of the value of those durable riches, which are laid up in heaven for the righteous. Are we in circumstances of

doubt and perplexity? How great is the happiness of being able to repair to the throne of Him, who 'ordereth the steps of a virtuous man,' that we may receive direction and assistance from that God, by whom 'the very hairs of our head are all numbered,' and who overlooks not 'the fall of a sparrow;' who can throw a beam of celestial light on the path it may be most expedient for us to tread, and which may finally conduct us to peace and safety. Are we separated for a time, by unavoidable circumstances, from the objects of our affection? Are any of them wafted on the vast and treacherous ocean; or do waters roll and mountains rise, between those who are connected by the endearing ties of consanguinity and friendship? How great, my brethren, is the privilege of offering our mutual prayers to that omniscient Parent, whose eye surveys, at a single glance, his intelligent offspring, 'in all places of his dominion,' that he would bless and protect our absent friends and relatives; that he would preserve them, to borrow the comprehensive language of our liturgy, 'from the dangers of the sea, from sickness, from the violence of enemies, and from every evil to which they may be exposed.' When, after the cares and labors of the day, we retire to our pillow, with what satisfaction may we not commit ourselves, in the defenceless hours of repose, to His gracious protection, who 'never slumbers nor sleeps;' who can guard us from the sudden tempest, or the fearful conflagration; who can shake the purpose of the midnight robber, or unnerve the arm of the lurking assassin. When, also, refreshed by the kindly influence of sleep, we awake with a vigor renewed like that of the eagle, and the morning light again salutes our dwellings, with what grateful feelings do not our thoughts ascend in prayer to Him, who causes the approach of his sun to dispel the shades of darkness!

> 'New born, we bless the waking hour,
> Once more, with awe, rejoice to be;
> Our conscious souls resume their power,
> And spring, our guardian God, to thee.'

With what fervor are we not prepared to supplicate his mercy and guidance through the ensuing day! With what earnest-

ness are we not disposed to pray, that he would defend us from 'every kind of danger,' that he would 'keep our tongues from evil, and our lips that they speak no guile;' or, if our minds should unhappily be disquieted by anger or passion, amidst the busy scenes before us, that, at least, the sun may not be permitted to 'go down upon our wrath.'

But prayer, in its most extensive sense, includes not merely petitions for divine mercies, but thanksgiving for favors received, confession of sins committed, and ascriptions of praise to the great Author of the universe. In all these acts of the soul, how great is our inward enjoyment and complacency, when they are rightly performed. When we receive a kindness from our earthly friends, how is the heart dilated with gratitude, and with what pleasure do we indulge the generous sentiment. How then must our bosoms be expanded with grateful emotions, when we acknowledge the important and innumerable benefits we have received from our Father in heaven, 'the author of every good and perfect gift,' and, indeed, the ultimate cause of even those blessings which are bestowed upon us through the instrumentality of our fellow men. 'How dear are thy counsels unto us, O God! O how great is the sum of them. If we tell them, they are more in number than the sand.' Who brought us into the scene of our earthly existence? Who preserved our helpless infancy? Who inspired the parental bosom with instinctive fondness? Who guided our froward and impetuous youth? Who hath directed the energies of our riper years, and been the support of our declining age? Who hath enabled us to elude 'the snare of the fowler,' and escape 'the noisome pestilence?' Who hath dissipated the terrors which assailed us by night, and shielded us from 'the arrow that flieth by day?' Who hath taught the eye of faith, looking unto Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life, to pierce the gloomy recesses of the grave, and opened the bright prospect of eternal happiness, beyond 'the dark valley of the shadow of death?' And is there no profit, my brethren, in thanking the great Author of these manifold blessings, and glorious hopes; no holy transport and

elevation of mind? Is not the sense of these benefits enhanced by viewing them as the gifts of God? Ask the holy men of old, the sages and the prophets of Jewish antiquity, who delighted to attune their harps to songs of thanksgiving. The lyre of David never emitted a sweeter strain, than when touched by the hand of religious gratitude. When, on the other hand, the heart is pierced with a sense of its aberrations from Him, who has a legitimate claim to its highest affections; when the conscience is polluted with guilt; when 'we have gone astray from the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls,' and, convinced at last, like the repentant prodigal, of our great and numberless offences against the Divine Majesty, are sincerely desirous of returning to our Heavenly Father, how unspeakable is the consolation of confessing our iniquities, and saying, with unfeigned humility, 'Father, we have sinned against heaven and in thy sight.' How great the relief to our broken hearts and contrite spirits, when, prostrated before the High and Holy One, who is gracious and long-suffering, with a full purpose of future amendment, through the assistance of his blessed Spirit, we plead the blood of the everlasting covenant, that 'cleanseth from all sin.' With what renewed ardor are we prepared again to walk in that pleasant and peaceful path, from which we had unhappily wandered, when dismissed from the throne of grace with the encouraging words, employed by our compassionate Saviour on a memorable occasion, 'Go, and sin no more.' When those lips which were lately closed by shame and sorrow are opened by that merciful Being, 'who forgiveth all our sins, and healeth all our infirmities,' how naturally shall we hasten to repeat the hymn of the inspired psalmist, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.'

But, lastly, prayer comprehends in its more general acceptation, that praise and adoration of the Divine Being, which is founded on his attributes, and supposes a deep impression of his glorious perfections. And is it not, my brethren, a distinguished honor, that we are permitted and encouraged to acquire a knowledge of the character of Him, who fills the uni-

verse with his presence; who is without 'beginning of days,' or 'end of time;' who said 'let there be light, and there was light; who spake, and it was done, who commanded, and it stood fast;' who directs the hosts of heaven in their courses, and governs the innumerable worlds, which the discoveries of modern science have brought to our knowledge, by his wisdom and his power? What, indeed, can more ennoble and exalt the mind of an intelligent being, than the contemplation of the divine perfections, as illustrated by the wonders of nature and displayed in the truths of revelation? Of what a sublime gratification is he deprived, who, to all practical purposes, is 'without God in the world;' who sees without emotion the rising and the setting sun; who views with careless indifference the boundless expanse of waters; who breathes the clear and elastic air, which animates his spirits, and invigorates his faculties, and beholds the blue arch of heaven extended over his head, without at least an internal ascription of praise to the omnipotent and bountiful Creator of all things; who regards with little concern even the less frequent, and, therefore, more striking phenomena of that portion of the magnificent universe which is within the reach of human vision—the lesser light, appointed to 'rule the night,' obscured by the shadow of the globe we inhabit, and the resplendent luminary of day 'shorn,' for a season, 'of his beams,' by the occasional intervention of the lunar orb, and who is scarcely excited by the sudden appearance of the eccentric comet, whose visits are so 'few and far between,' to religious contemplation!

Such, my brethren, are some of the pleasures and advantages of prayer; but, without sincerity, and purity of intention, we can never fully enjoy them. If 'the heavens are not clean in his sight,' who is 'of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' and if even his angels, those ministering spirits who surround his throne, 'are chargeable with folly,' we may well conclude, that even the prayer of the obstinately wicked will be accounted an abomination. It is not, indeed, the least important of the benefits, which we derive from an habitual attention to the duty

of prayer, that it tends to preserve us from sinful indulgences, by constantly suggesting the striking inconsistency between devotional performances and criminal actions. This consideration, through divine grace, may render the course of our lives more conformable to the language of our prayers; and thus lead us to avoid the danger of those, who 'draw near unto God with their mouth, and honor him with their lips,' while their heart is far removed from him. Prayer will soon become a tedious and uncomfortable ceremony to those who, in the use of its solemn and appropriate language, pronounce only their own condemnation. Its benefits can be justly appreciated by those only who duly estimate the value of time, and the awful realities of eternity, of which the blessings are suspended on the diligent cultivation of that spirit, which alone can qualify us for the worthy performance of this sacred duty, and prepare us to unite in the triumphant song of that 'innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect,' who are employed in ascribing 'salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb.'

SERMON VIII.

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THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

I JOHN I. 8, 9.

IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NO SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US. IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS, AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

FROM these words I shall take occasion to make a few remarks on the forgiveness of sins;—*first*, as a Christian doctrine; —*secondly*, as a Christian attainment.

I. To those who have lived under the general influence of the Gospel, forgiveness of sins may seem a matter of course. Accustomed as we are to the accents of mercy, we do not readily appreciate the blessing or the difficulty of forgiveness. But go amongst a heathen population, where the light of the Gospel is not seen, where no angel of good tidings proclaims the message of peace, and no heavenly choir announces the good will of Heaven to men; and in the barbarousness of a cruel superstition, its horrid penances, the sacrifice of children, the voluntary and involuntary immolation of human victims, and in the desperateness of obstinate wickedness, you may see the effects of their deplorable ignorance of the propitiousness of the divine character. And there too may be learned that there occurs to the mind of a sinner a natural and a formidable difficul-

ty in the way of understanding or receiving the doctrine of the forgiveness of sin. That sense of guilt which follows the commission of sins, even in cases of wonderful ignorance and stupidity, creates a distrust of the divine mercy, and destroys most effectually such a confidence in God's forgiveness as might enable the sinner to reap the benefit of the doctrine.

Or, go to the pages of unevangelized theology ; to the wise men of antiquity, and you will find a silence on the subject of forgiveness, a darkness, a difficulty that undermines and at length overthrows the whole fabric of their religion, as inefficient and unsuited to the character and the wants of men. Some reasons why God should forgive sins, or some decisive assurance that he will forgive, were necessary ; neither of which were to be found in their philosophy.

Although in the estimation of a large class of mankind it may seem of little importance whether there be any foundation for the doctrine of forgiveness or not ; though the thoughtless and worldly, who live for the enjoyments and acquisitions of the present life, may deem it sufficient for their present purpose that they have some general indefinite notions of the divine benevolence, the foundation of a hope as shadowy and undefinable ; yet when a man begins to feel in earnest his need of religion ; begins to see the relation in which he as a sinner stands to his Maker and Benefactor ; when he learns the extent of his delinquency from what the law requires, and the unchangeable equity of the divine proceedings, the question of forgiveness, then, becomes an interesting one, and at the same time the subject assumes an appearance somewhat alarming. Serious difficulties present themselves, and the least degree of doubt on a point of so much interest and importance, is exceedingly distressing. And with these newly acquired views and sensibility, it requires some positive evidence, some strong assurance from God, that he can and will forgive sins, in order that he may obtain any peace of mind, or indulge any satisfactory hope. And were it not, that the Gospel inculcates this doctrine unequivocally ; were it not, that we have the strongest attestation of its

truth in the sufferings and blood of the Redeemer, we might see sinners thronging the road to despair, and returning from their distressing convictions to a more obdurate iniquity. The truth, when it is understood and felt, often creates an alarm which renders it an exceedingly difficult matter to convince the penitent offender that there is pardon for him. There was occasion, and God hath indeed seen fit to establish the doctrine by his promise, and to confirm it by an oath. 'I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, *as I live*, saith the Lord.' 'That by two immutable things,' in respect to either of which 'it was impossible for God to lie; we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.'

The mysteries of redemption are described as things which even the angels desire to look into. And can it be doubted that the announcement of the divine mercy to sinful men was *to them* matter of wonder, as well as of joy? They were aware, from their acquaintance with the character of God, that he must set himself against all iniquity. They knew that it was impossible that he should countenance rebellion against himself. And until the doctrine of forgiveness was established by unfolding the way in which it might be exercised without violating the essential attributes of the divine nature, the condition of man as a sinner must have been considered by them one of hopelessness and despair. Indeed, there are difficulties obvious to limited capacities; difficulties which the sinner himself feels so soon as he becomes deeply sensible of the real heinousness of his sin, and has a right impression of the character and perfections of God.

The subserviency and obedience of his own creatures to the sovereign Creator of all things, the source of all beings—is a duty as binding upon the conscience of every intelligent being as it is obvious to every capacity. It is a thing of course, and which every considerate being acknowledges to be of course. And whether God hath promulgated his laws in form and language, or not; whether he hath specified the penalty of diso-

bedience or not; every one feels and knows that, so far as God hath revealed his own character to his creatures, his law is a conformity on their part to the moral perfections of his character; and the penalty is the natural consequence of an irreconcileable opposition to omnipotent power.

But God *had published* his law to man, and *had announced* the penalty, with the solemnity of form and manner which belongs to legal proceedings. He had pledged his word for the death of the transgressor—'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' By the transaction thou art condemned.

Now, when you consider how much of the happiness of all the celestial intelligences is derived from contemplating the perfections of the divine character, and that their security and blessedness depend upon the immaculate and immutable nature of those perfections; when you consider that the ineffable enjoyment of the Deity himself must depend upon the absolute perfection of his attributes, you perceive that all the happiness and security of intelligent beings, including even that of the great First Cause, seems to depend on the veracity of the divine character, pledged for the punishment of sin. In this state of things it was not easy to see what there was for the pardon of sin, or how the offender could be spared from punishment, without lending that countenance to iniquity which would scatter the seed of misery, insubordination and destruction throughout the universe of God's creation. The essential nature and truth of the divine character seemed to require that the sinner should be pursued with merited vengeance. The legal equity of the divine proceedings seemed to require that the general interest should be secured at the expense of the rebellious offenders. There did, indeed, seem to be no way in which favor could be shown them without affording some direct or indirect sanction to iniquity. If the most sacred law might be violated with impunity, and the most solemn sanctions of the Supreme Being might be evaded, what restraints upon vice were left; what terror in the threatening of God, or what hope in his promise?

When man, therefore, had become a sinner, and had entailed iniquity upon his race, to the comprehension of all finite minds there could appear no other natural consequence but that 'the soul that sinned should die.'

And besides this, there was a difficulty in the way of the sinner's restoration to the divine favor and forgiveness, arising from another quarter. There is in sin a natural oppositeness to the holiness of God's character, as well as to the enjoyment of his favor. When wrong is done knowingly and habitually, the man feels in his heart a sensible hostility to the purity, and presence, and power of God. There is a disposition to regard him as an enemy, and the feelings inevitably array themselves against the submissiveness and virtues of religion. Sin works in the soul not only a disqualification for true happiness, but a deep opposition to the means of happiness. An alienation of feeling, that raises an obstacle to reconciliation, not easily removed. By feeling that God is our enemy, we cherish enmity to him, and it is this that contributes much to the hopelessness of the sinner's condition. Before a reconcilement can be effected, some measures must be taken by God to subdue this estrangement of feeling. The overture must be made by him whose authority has been contemned and insulted, and whose veracity requires to be established and honored; must be made to man, who has exposed himself to merited punishment, and is persisting in his daring rebellion. Under these circumstances, it is indeed wonderful that mercy should have been offered. And the sinner, who suffers the influence of these difficulties on his mind, whether he be aware of their origin or not, requires evidence of the most convincing and striking kind, that God is in fact willing to reconcile the world to himself. The case requires an expense of pains, not only to vindicate the truth and equity of the divine proceedings, but as much to woo the sinner, the party in this breach that has placed himself at such fearful disadvantages. Yes, to win the transgressor himself to a belief and acquiescence in the gracious terms of forgiveness and acceptance.

The Gospel discloses a scheme of salvation adapted to this state of things. All these difficulties, divine wisdom and benevolence has so far removed, as that salvation can be offered to man on the easy conditions of repentance and faith. And, at the same time, has provided the most operative and affecting means of convincing the mind and of humbling the heart.

Whatever may be the difficulty of comprehending fully the nature of Christ's atonement, it is believed that facts sufficiently attest the efficacy of the doctrine. In the minds of all those who receive it, it *does magnify* the law and make it honorable. In the view of all but the rejecters of salvation, the practical effect of the Saviour's sufferings is secured. Justice, unimpeached, guards the sanctity of the law, and preserves the doctrine of forgiveness from licentious consequences. The love of Christ constraineth believers to devote themselves to the cause of holiness; constraineth them to live to him who hath bought them with a price—the precious blood of Christ. In the sight of all holy beings, the legal difficulties are removed; a ransom is found in the blood of Jesus. By his propitiation for sin, the righteousness of God is manifested in the forgiveness of sins. 'He is just, and the justifier of him that believeth.'

And when the sinner stands convicted at the bar of his own conscience, and his sins put themselves in such formidable array as to threaten the extinction of hope, and to rouse up the feelings of desperate hostility, the appeal in proof of the propitiousness and benevolence of the Deity is then most strong and convincing. When every other ray is shut out, and there is but one point from which the hope of divine mercy can come, it beams from that point with an amplitude and richness of godlike munificence. God has attested his willingness to forgive sins by the most extraordinary acts of grace that the human mind is capable of conceiving. 'God so loved the world'—so desired the salvation of men—that 'he spared not his only begotten Son, but delivered him up for us all;'—delivered him up to a life of suffering and insult, and to a death of torture and ignominy;—delivered h[illegible]n up for the salvation and hope of those

who were enemies to his character, and hostile to his government. Here is demonstration of the divine placability. It is the kind of evidence precisely adapted to overcome the obstinacy of the convicted sinner. It is striking. It is melting—when it is felt it is overpowering. It does subdue the perverseness of rebellious spirits. It brings the haughty soul into captivity to the obedience of Christ, to the willing and patient service of so gracious a master.

II. I will now further remark on the forgiveness of sins as a Christian attainment. How many, mourning over their unworthiness, have felt their hopes sinking under the burden of sin, and perhaps have sighed for the happy lot of those who were permitted to behold the Saviour when he was on earth, and to receive from his own gracious lips, or his look of compassion, the unequivocal declaration of divine pardon—and perhaps have been tempted to wait and to hope for some supernatural or extraordinary assurance and persuasion that their sins are forgiven them. But as no such assurance can be reasonably expected, how may we certainly obtain forgiveness, and what is the satisfactory evidence of our being the subjects of it?

Let us remember that God is infinitely exalted far beyond the impotent rage of all his rebellious creatures. Though our sins are abhorrent to his nature, they can no more disturb the tranquillity of the divine mind, than they can overthrow the foundations of the eternal throne. Our sins may injure ourselves. They may do mischief to our fellow-men. But whatever concern God may take respecting them, whether to punish or to forgive, must be dictated by independent goodness; a pure exercise of disinterested benevolence. His hatred of sin, whatever it be, is not that passion which disturbs the peace and brings disquiet into the mind. The divine vengeance which inflicts upon the sinner a merited retribution, is not that feeling which rankles in the bosom of the revengeful, and which is as fatal to the enjoyment of him who cherishes it, as it is to the safety of its victim. Sin is, indeed, the opposite to the divine perfections, and can never be regarded of God with compla-

cency till he renounces the essential principles of his own existence. But that he frets himself because of evil doers; that the divine mind is subject to the corroding effect of a vindictive spirit; or that the forgiveness of a sinner implies an exercise involving the happiness of the Deity, we must not believe. The same unfailing goodness, the same unalterable benevolence, directs his counsel, whether the sinner be consigned to deserved punishment, or made a monument of mercy. He is the same God, that changeth not; the same in his being, his attributes, his affections. Therefore, whatever be the change that takes place in the relation between God and the sinner, when iniquity is forgiven, it must be effected by the change of the sinner. The change must be in the creature, since none can be predicated of the Creator.

In the administration of his universal government, it is the dictate of Infinite Goodness to regard the general welfare of all his subjects; and when a part of his nobler creation, to whom he has committed the dignified trust of moral freedom, in the exercise of an agency for which they are rightfully accountable, do separate their interest from that of the rest; when they do voluntarily seek their welfare in absolute inconsistency and opposition to the happiness and safety of the whole, it is but the exercise of kindness, it is mercy and benevolence in God, to guarantee the well-being of his faithful subjects by the sacrifice of the rebellious; and the question whether they can be forgiven is rightly resolved, not into the question whether the divine feelings toward their character can be changed, but whether any thing can be done for them, or in them, which will remove the necessity of their punishment, and overrule the natural and penal consequences of their sins.

And as no change in God can be expected for the pardon of the sinner, so, by the riches of his grace, none is necessary. No preparation, which the administration of the moral government of God seemed to require, has been left unmade. 'All things are now ready.' All things are now ready in respect to any general consequences that might accrue from the exercise

of pardoning mercy. The sinner is the only party in this transaction that admits of change, and to his own heart and character is limited the only preparation that remains to be made.

If, therefore, any of you remain unreconciled to God, the fault is altogether in yourselves, and you must look that the evil be cured in your own hearts, if it be cured at all. If, being impenitent, you feel that the relation you sustain towards God is one of hostility, be assured that he can never be different from what he is now. Nothing can be done, and, through his provident mercy, nothing remains to be done, but that which must be accomplished in yourselves. Whatever be the prospect of reconciliation, and whatever be the means of effecting it, those means must be ultimately directed to the renewal of your own disposition and feelings. God neither changes, nor needs to change, in order to your forgiveness. The same divine benevolence is in exercise, the same disinterested kindness after your pardon as before.

The conditions of divine forgiveness proposed in the Gospel, are repentance and faith. Sin has disaffected the mind of the sinner towards God, and produced its ruinous effects upon the heart. By the exercise of repentance, deep and genuine, this unhappy effect is counteracted; by the operation of faith through divine grace, a change is wrought in the affections and character, which, as the only remaining thing necessary to pardon, establishes immediately a new relation to God; and forgiveness follows, as certainly as if it were audibly pronounced by the lips of the Saviour. So soon as the heart becomes disaffected toward sin, and rightly affected toward the divine character, our sins and iniquities are remembered no more against us. So far as we are delivered from the commission of sin, and its effects upon our feelings towards God, we are obviously pardoned. Nor could we have better evidence of our acceptance with God, were a voice from heaven to pronounce our pardon.

But we must not dream of the forgiveness of sin while we live under its power, and so long as we are not actually deliv-

ered from its polluting influence on the affections and character. The effects of sin on the feelings constitute, in part, the punishment of sin; and so long as we suffer the punishment of sin, how can we be said to be pardoned?

In the exercise of humility and penitence, and with a heart disposed to justify and love our Maker for what he already is, let us go to him for the mercy we need. '*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

BY THE LATE

RT. REV. REGINALD HEBER, D. D.

Lord Bishop of Calcutta.

Life nor death shall us dissever
From his love who reigns forever.
Will he fail us? never, never,
When to him we cry.

Sin may seek to snare us,
Fiery passion tear us,
Doubt and fear and grim despair
Their fangs against us try:

But his might shall still defend us,
And his blessed Son befriend us,
And his Holy Spirit send us
Comfort ere we die.

HYMN FOR WHITSUNDAY.

BY THE SAME.

Spirit of Truth, on this thy day,
To thee for help we cry,
To guide us through the dreary way
Of dark mortality.

We ask not, Lord, thy cloven flame,
Or tongues of various tone;
But long thy praises to proclaim
With fervor in our own.

We mourn not that prophetic skill
Is found on earth no more;
Enough for us to trace thy will
In Scripture's sacred lore.

We neither have nor seek the power
The demons to control;
But thou, in dark temptation's hour,
Shalt chase them from the soul.

No heavenly harpings soothe our ear,
No mystic dreams we share;
Yet hope to feel thy comfort near,
And bless thee in our prayer.

When tongue shall cease, and power decay,
And knowledge empty prove,
Do thou thy trembling servants stay,
With faith, with hope, with love.

ASCENSION DAY.

BY THE SAME.

'Sit thou on my right hand, my Son!' saith the Lord.
'Sit thou on my right hand, my Son,
Till in the fatal hour
Of my wrath, and my power,
Thy foes shall be a footstool to thy throne.'

'Prayer shall be made to thee, my Son,' saith the Lord.
'Prayer shall be made to thee, my Son,
From earth and air and sea,
And all that in them be,
Which thou for thine heritage hast won.'

'Daily be thou praised, my Son,' saith the Lord.
'Daily be thou praised, my Son;
And all that live and move,
Let them bless thy bleeding love,
And the work which thy worthiness hath done.'

SERMON IX.

BY THE REV. JAMES MONTGOMERY, D. D.
*Rector of St. Stephen's Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.**

THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE.

MARK XVI. 15.

AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD, AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.

My Brethren, what an awful interest and importance are imparted to this command of the Saviour by the circumstances under which it was given! Having triumphed over death and burst the bars of the grave, he mysteriously appeared to his doubting and disconsolate disciples, and after 'upbraiding them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen;' and with his mind occupied with anxiety and interest about the future advancement and diffusion of the gospel, he uttered this command, which was thus enforced by all the *authority* with which his *resurrection* had stamped his pretensions as the divine Instructer and Saviour of the world. It was moreover the *last* command he *ever* gave! How powerfully must this consideration have impressed the sense of its obligation: and constrained a prompt and devoted obedience to his behest. And

*Preached in St. Stephen's Church, Philadelphia, on the occasion of a collection in behalf of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.

accordingly no sooner was he received up *into heaven, to sit on the right hand of God*, than the eleven 'went forth, and preached *every where*, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.'

Nothing is more refreshing to the serious mind than the contemplation of the rapid diffusion of the gospel during primitive times; nor does any thing afford more encouragement to those hopes which look forward to its future *universal* dominion.—Even in the age of the apostles, the glad tidings of salvation were sounded from Parthia eastward, to the western extremity of the then known world. Wherever Jew or Gentile was to be found, the gospel, which was to the one a *stumbling block* and to the other *foolishness*, was proclaimed by its first heralds; and, aided by the demonstration of the Spirit and of Power, became to multitudes of believers the power of God unto salvation. Those holy men unfurled its banners, and, under a constraining sense of the obligation of the high command of their divine Master, and confiding in the assurance of his presence and protection, marched resolutely forth. On every side the darkness which had covered the nations was dispersed by the light of truth. The altars of an impious idolatry crumbled into dust. The lying subterfuges of a vain philosophy were put to shame. And that very religion, which was but lately persecuted and despised, whose blessed Founder himself had not where to lay his head; whose followers were at first timid and irresolute; whose very genius was irreconcileably opposed to all existing systems of philosophy and morals, to the deep-rooted policy of states, to all those opinions, and habits, and manners, which had become consecrated by time and riveted by prejudice, was now on her victorious progress to the homage of the nations. And even after its miraculous agencies had been withdrawn, and she was left to the fidelity and zeal of her votaries under the ordinary influences of divine grace, she continued conquering and to conquer; triumphing over the sophistry of the schools, and the delusion of paganism; supplanting altars inscribed to the unknown

God, by temples for the worship of Him, in whom we live and move, and have our being; challenging the countenance of the mighty of the earth; and eventually ascending the throne of empire, with the safety of which she became identified, and with the limits of which she was co-extensive.

But this signal triumph of Christianity, marks an era of ominous import. From this period, owing to the paralyzing influence of secular policy, and of worldly alliances, she began to retrograde. The fine gold of her purity grew dim—and her whole character became deteriorated. In this state of spiritual depression, few were the devoted heralds of the cross who went forth in the ardor of primitive zeal, and in the confidence of primitive faith, for the conversion of the nations. And the assertion may be hazarded, that in the long tract of time which has intervened between that and our own day, the exertions and success in this godlike work have borne as little proportion to the spiritual urgencies and destitutions of that interval, as to the splendid conquests and the devoted efforts of the short antecedent period. We are aware we ought to make this assertion with some qualification; and grant that there are some redeeming exceptions to this long reign of apathy; some luminous traces in this spiritual darkness. But these, like the stars which twinkle in the canopy of heaven, serve only to relieve the sway of night, without destroying its dominion.

And even in our own day, distinguished as it is, in the comparison with those that have gone by, by a more diffusive zeal in the cause of Christ, and boastfully called the era of *religious effort*, how puny are the exertions which are making, and how inadequate the interest felt for the proclaiming of the gospel to those lying in the region and shadow of death! How incommensurate are both with the abundant means and facilities with which we are favored, and with the necessities which demand their application and improvement.

When it is considered that of the more than eight hundred millions of the human family, it is estimated that considerably

more than one half of that number are entirely destitute of the privileges, the hopes, and the consolations of the gospel, and are consequently groping in utter darkness, and sunk in the most abject degradation, the dupes of a debasing superstition, or the victims of a cruel and inexorable fanaticism, and that of the remaining number, which make up what is called Christendom, multitudes are merely *nominal* Christians; or the deluded votaries of a mutilated and counterfeit religion; or the blind adherents of a faith which, like the body without the animating spirit, is dead and unprofitable: with these facts in view, let the question be put—and let it be faithfully answered. Are the *aggregate* exertions of Christians of our day at all proportioned to the spiritual necessities of the world? Is there, in this our thrice blessed country, where all the moral agencies for the missionary enterprise are unshackled—and where the means for its prosecution are so abundant, an adequate sympathy in the wretched condition of those who are without hope and without God in the world?

And to come nearer home, have *we*, the members of our Apostolic Church in this country, so highly favored with spiritual privileges, and crowned with providential blessings,—have we made any contribution to this great work, at all proportioned—I will not say, to the imploring calls upon our sympathy and interest, and to our responsibilties—but even to the efforts of other communions, considered as far below us in whatever regards a primitive and orthodox faith; a holy, fervent and scriptural worship; and an apostolic constitution of the ministry; deficient and meagre as these efforts have confessedly been? How shall we answer this question? Must we not take shame to ourselves, and make the humiliating confession that we have been hitherto blameably indifferent in this high work of Christian charity? Do not the greater part of us seem to have forgotten the obligation of the command, '*Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature?*' Or if not forgotten, where shall we look for an adequate exhibition of the spirit and the conduct it would

prompt? Where shall we find that influential and constraining sense of the duties it involves, which displays itself in a holy emulation of primitive zeal? While we hear much said, in pity and indignation, about the intrusive sway of the *crescent* where once the *Cross* displayed its triumphs; and many a lament, that the abominable impostures, the lying vanities and the horrid sensualities which the former symbolizes and upholds, should supplant the divine truth, the eternal realities and the heavenly purity, of which the latter is the characteristic emblem; while we often deplore the prevalence over the fairest portions of our globe of a vain superstition, and are grieved that beings, endowed like ourselves with the excelling faculty of reason, should become the victims of its senseless delusions and of its deadly spells; yet where, after all, is that deep sense of spiritual thraldom; of alienation from God; of destitution of all the consolations which cheer the pilgrimage of this life, and of all the hopes which gild the prospect of a better? Where that efficient sympathy, which, glowing even at the physical and temporary distresses of a brother, kindles into a blaze at the recital of his spiritual maladies, and anxiously directs him to the *balm in Gilead* and to the *Physician* there? Ah! my brethren—have we not cause to apprehend that a general apathy has seized upon our souls, and paralyzed their spiritual sensibilities,and their noblest aspirations? that the sense of the obligation of the divine command has been too long dormant in our minds—that we have too long boasted of the privileges, and enjoyed the rich blessings, which belong to the disciples of Christ, without giving proof of our sincerity and allegiance, by a devoted obedience to his *last* command? And yet is not that command as obligatory upon *us* as upon those to whom it was originally given—and is it not equally *our* bounden duty to do all that in us lies in the great work of subduing the world to the obedience of faith?

My Brethren—you cannot but give me an affirmative answer. And yet, though theoretically acknowledged, is not that

command practically disregarded and contemned? It would seem that a sincere sensibility to its obligation, would display itself in all the correspondent agencies by which it may be accomplished! What shall I say then to excite you to a becoming sympathy in the glorious enterprise to which your Saviour calls you? Shall I prove to you that his command did not respect exclusively the apostles to whom it was delivered? That it contemplated the universal diffusion of the gospel; the preaching of the glad tidings throughout the habitable globe; the subjugation of *all* the nations to its dominion; and that as this was not intended to be consummated within the apostolic age, the obligation must have descended to their immediate successors; that they evinced their understanding of it, by practically emulating the zeal and interest of the heralds who had gone before—and that the command will remain unchanged and binding so long as a single spot of our earth continues unblest with the light of truth, or a single sinner remains unconverted to the faith? Need I say that there is at present as much occasion and scope for missionary exertion, as in the very days of our Lord and his apostles; and point you, for proof of the assertion, on one hand, to the thousands who yet groan under the very yoke of legal and ceremonial bondage from which it was their steadfast purpose and unceasing effort, to deliver their Jewish kinsmen; and on the other, to the wide spread desolations of that same idolatry which stirred the spirit of Paul at Athens, and against the abominations of which he, with all his devoted compeers, waged a relentless war? Need I say that paganism is at every period and every where, essentially the same; and that, however dignified with the name of an *elegant mythology*, and tricked out in all the refined and fascinating graces of an unsanctified taste, is yet, in all its modifications, ignorance of the true God and of his attributes; a bondage under the power of Satan, a state of spiritual death, an alienation from the divine favor? Need I remind you that this was precisely the view which the Apostles took of the subject in their day, when they preached that men

should turn from these idolatrous vanities to serve the living God, and Jesus Christ whom he had sent; that such, in their estimation, was the condition of the Heathen, as contrasted with their own happier lot, as *children of God*, and *joint heirs with Christ* of an eternal inheritance *purchased with his precious blood!*

If these things be so, then, surely you will acknowledge that the command of the Saviour is upon you,—that it is as incumbent upon you to cherish an interest in the spiritual wretchedness of your fellow men, and to exert yourself for their relief, as it was upon those who received the command from the mouth of the Master himself.

Why then is it not equally obeyed? On this subject I dare not flatter you with any other explanation than such as truth will warrant; and my answer is—*because we have not the same sense of the value and importance of the gospel* as influenced the hearts and conduct of its primitive followers. Did we possess correct apprehensions of the personal importance of faith to every individual under heaven; did we recognize the gospel as the *power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;* did we truly estimate it as containing the only remedial provision suited to our apostate race; as unfolding to offending man the only door of access to his offended Maker; did we thus consider the subject, we should not only be impelled to mould our own hearts, to regulate our own conduct, and to animate our own hopes, by its disclosures; but, in gratitude for the unspeakable gift, and in the exercise of that diffusive spirit of benevolence, which essentially belongs to the gospel, and must be imbibed in some degree by all its true disciples, we would be solicitous to extend it to every one within the sphere of our exertions, who might be a stranger to its consolations and its blessings; we should indulge an ardent interest and sympathy in the moral and spiritual wretchedness of the nations who *know not God*, and gladly and abundantly contribute to its relief, by all the means in our power, our personal services, our influence,

our wealth ; or if these be wanting, our *prayers,* which of themselves can draw down blessings on the work of evangelizing the world ; and, without which, all other means will be unblest.

But how shall I impress you with an adequate *sense of the value and importance of the gospel?* Shall I direct you to the compassionate and benevolent Jesus, to learn from him a proper estimate of the subject? Behold him, then, while commissioning his apostles, forewarning them *to beware of men, for they would deliver them up to councils, and scourge them in their synagogues—that they should be brought before governors and kings for his sake—that the brother should deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child—that the children should rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death —that they should be hated of all men, for his name's sake.* Now would the Saviour, whose characteristic was benevolence, who went about doing good not only to the souls but to the bodies of men, who delighted in the exercise of charity and love, and for the relief of human suffering and wo wrought many of his miracles ; would he have commissioned his faithful followers, those whom he *had loved to the end,* to a work, in the prosecution of which, by his own assurance, they could expect nothing but contempt, and persecution, and suffering, and death, without a full conviction of the *paramount importance* of the gospel, so important to the spiritual and eternal interests of those whom he came to save, that it was to be proclaimed, at whatever hazard to the comfort, the health, the lives of those whom he so tenderly loved? This single consideration would seem to me sufficient to awaken your sensibilities to the *value and importance of the gospel.*

And look at the conduct of his disciples in executing the commission, and learn from them their estimate of the matter. With the assured anticipation of encountering the most formidable trials and sufferings, they unhesitatingly went forth at their Lord's command, renouncing every thing dear to them—yea, counting not *their own lives dear ;* and met persecution and death with a

heroism which could have been inspired only by their sincere conviction of the truths which they avouched, and by their deep impression of their infinite importance to themselves, and to all to whom they were sent to proclaim them.

If these considerations be not sufficient to elevate your conceptions of the subject to their proper standard, let them be aided by your reflections on the nature of the Gospel. What is the Gospel? *good tidings!* to whom? to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. The blessed Jesus came to seek and to save those who were lost,—lost to all spiritual life—to the favor of God—to all hope of a heavenly inheritance. It is the loss of the SOUL, my brethren, which the Gospel was designed to avert. By your estimate of the value of your *souls*, then, judge of the value of the Gospel—and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul.

Should this not suffice, let our last appeal to you be drawn from the infinite price paid for that redemption, which is the sum and substance of the Gospel. If God spared not his only begotten Son, but willingly gave him up to die, the just for the unjust; if that Son humbled himself even to the death of the Cross for us miserable sinners, and on his way to it endured every indignity, and insult, and suffering that were necessary to fill up the cup, the bitter dregs of which he was to exhaust before his atonement could be accepted, how transcendant must be the value of that Gospel which proclaims so mighty a deliverance, and discloses the terms and conditions upon which alone it becomes available.

Were we, by these considerations, duly impressed with a sense of the infinite importance of the Gospel, we should be prompted to obedience to our Saviour's command by the most influential motives that can possibly act upon the mind. The *glory of God* is the motive which ought to prompt all our actions: and in no department ought it to be more operative than in those exertions and plans which have in view the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. The glory of God must be

eminently promoted by whatever tends to the furtherance and developement of that scheme which reflects, more than all things else, the glory of his infinite perfections; which, foretold by all the holy prophets since the world began; adumbrated by the institutions of the law; the grand object to which all the divine dispensations have reference, is unfolded to us in the Gospel in all the glory of spotless justice, unbounded mercy, and resistless power.

And is not a concurrence with God's counsels and designs, a promotion of his glory? *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done*, on earth as it is in heaven, was the supplication dictated by the Saviour himself, when he was anxiously directing the prayers of his disciples to those objects by which his Father would be most eminently glorified. And that it is the divine will that the Gospel should be proclaimed in all the world, who can doubt, that understands and believes those splendid predictions, with which the prophetic writings are replete; which look forward, with no dubious import, to the period, when on every spot visited by the Orb of Day, the Sun of Righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings—and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea? This consummation, be it remembered, is to be effected, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, by human instrumentality and co-operation. And this consideration, while it plainly indicates our *duty*, directs us to those efforts by which we can best promote the glory of the Most High.

Nor is the propagation of the Gospel, less promotive of the good of man. Our compassion is easily excited by *temporal* suffering, and our benevolence readily exerted for its relief—How much stronger ought to be our sympathy with that which is *spiritual;* which affects not the *body*, but the *soul*; which issues not in *temporal* but *eternal* death? For this the Gospel offers the only remedy. It discloses the only way by which apostate man can be redeemed from sin and everlasting perdition, and rendered meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. And it is this excelling property which supplies an additional

motive to obedience to the divine command to *preach the gospel to every creature.*

Influenced by such a sense of the value and importance of the gospel, and prompted by such *motives*—the General Convention of our Church, seven years ago, established "the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States," and it is in behalf of this institution, that the present appeal is made. And how shall I conciliate your interest, and secure your benefactions in its cause? need I remind you that the urgent wants of our *own* country, particularly those of her recent settlements to the west—where there are found, and whither are annually migrating many of our communion, who have torn themselves away from the privileges of the sanctuary, and from the sound of the preached word, and are doomed to the horrors of a spiritual famine, to a privation of the public means of grace, and exposed thereby to a declension of piety, to a depravation of morals, and to the loss of their souls—need I say that these wants cry aloud for relief, and that we are without necessary means? Our institution contemplates their relief—and makes them the object of that peculiar solicitude with which she regards her *domestic department.* But while she thus follows the scriptural injunction and dispenses her beneficence *especially* to the *household of faith*, she is not unmindful of the obligation of *doing good* to *all* men. And in her *foreign* department makes ample provision for the judicious appropriation of all the funds that may be contributed for foreign objects.

In both departments an humble beginning has been made. In the former several missionaries have been some time employed; and their success supplies abundant encouragement to our efforts to provide the means of increased usefulness. In the latter, providential hindrances have prevented, until lately, the accomplishment of our wish to have a missionary of this society on *foreign ground*—and we now rejoice in its happy consummation on the shores of Greece. May we not indulge the hope

that the classic associations which endear that country to the scholar; the cruel sufferings from her ruthless oppressors which give her a claim to the sympathy of the Philanthropist; and her enjoyment of a common faith, which, to the *Christian*, adds irresistible force to the appeal; will excite among us an efficient sentiment of compassion, displaying itself in a readiness to contribute of our abundance to *all their necessities*, and especially to those to which it is the peculiar province of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society to minister.

But there are other lands which invite our interest and exertions—and we owe it to ourselves, to the Church, and to God, to have our missionaries *there*. And here I feel assured that you have anticipated me in my reference, especially to degraded and benighted *Africa*. Oh, my brethren! what a debt we owe to Africa! Besides all the motives and all the claims which should prompt and demand our exertions for her spiritual amelioration, arising out of the general obligation resting upon our consciences to extend to her destitutions the life and hopes of the gospel, there are special considerations, constraining and irresistible, which should impel *American christians* to instant and efficient action in her behalf. Though not naturally implicated in the original guilt of that horrid traffic in human lives; yet the long and profitable enjoyment of its unholy fruits; the very existence at present in our land of African slavery; devolve upon us the imperative duty of making the only reparation for the wrongs and sufferings which have so horridly characterized that *trade of blood*.

Heaven grant that there may be diffused among us a more fervent and efficient sympathy for the spiritual destitutions of the nations that sit in darkness; and that it may prompt the liberal contribution of our means to enable the Society efficaciously to participate in the high duty of evangelizing the world! And let us not be deterred, my brethren, by any apprehensions of *diminishing* our means for *domestic operations*, which you may most warrantably prefer in your scheme of doing good. And

did I fear such a result I would not willingly be accessary to it. But I have no such dreads. On the contrary, the best wish I can indulge for the cause of *domestic missions*, is, that there should be a diffusive and a glowing concern in the *foreign* interests of the Society. For it always has happened, and, from the force of moral causes, ever will happen, that the prevalence of the latter exerts a most stirring and effective influence on the former; and that domestic missions are *there* and by *those* most adequately maintained, *where* and by *whom* most interest is taken in the *foreign* cause.

But whatever may be your preferences for either of these objects, they furnish no ground of opposition to the present appeal; inasmuch as the society allows you to choose between them, and to appropriate your contributions to one or the other as your own judgment may dictate; and it is pledged to apply them to their designated object.

Having in view these important ends, and with such judicious provisions for effectuating them, the "Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society," is now, for the first time, in this way, commended to your christian munificence: and it claims your *patronage*,

Because it is a cherished institution of your Church,

Because it is the best medium through which you can contribute your means and exertions to the great work of spreading the Gospel, and thus obey the most solemn and obligatory command of your Saviour.

Because your active interest in it is the best proof you can give of your correct appreciation of, and your decided attachment to the principles of your own church—

And if any additional incitement be wanting to awaken a suitable sensibility to these claims, let it be found—

In the praiseworthy example of other denominations of our country, whose noble efforts in the missionary cause are worthy of all commendation, and ought to *provoke* us to a holy emulation.

In the illustrious precedent set before us by that Church, to which our own "is indebted, under God, for her first foundation, and a long continuance of nursing care and protection;" to whose missionary zeal the church in this country, up to the period of the revolution, owed her very existence; which is now exerted, with augmented efficiency, to relieve the spiritual destitutions of her dependencies, and to magnify God's name among the heathen.

And in the consideration that we have hitherto done but little in the cause, compared with the abundant means with which we are blessed.

And, my brethren, remembering the talents committed to us, let us be impelled to their proper use and application by a sense of the obligation of the divine injunction, *freely ye have received, freely give*, and by a practical and constraining regard to that eternal rule, which will govern the scrutiny of the judgment day—"*From them to whom much is given, will much be required.*"

AFRICA.

A MISSIONARY HYMN.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM CROSSWELL.

When shall thy centre opened be?
When shall the veil that lay
Upon that land of mystery
So long, be torn away?
When shall the hallowed Cross be seen
Far in those sunny tracts,
Beyond the lofty mountain-screen
And thundering cataracts?

When shall the daily barks that bring
Rich lading to the sea,
Of plumes of gorgeous coloring,
And choicest ivory,

And incense of Acacia groves,
And costly gems, and grains
Of that most precious gold, wash'd down
By Abyssinian rains ;—

When shall they bear a freightage back,
More precious than those woods
Whose fragrance fills the Niger's track
In seasons of the floods ?
When shall each kingdom that receives
The gospel, learn to prize
The treasures hidden in its leaves
Above all merchandise ?

Then bread upon thy waters cast
Shall not be cast in vain,
But after many days are past,
It shall be found again ;
Then thy barbaric sons shall sue,
Nor nature's self resist,
An entrance for their kindred true—
The dark Evangelist !

HYMN FOR ST. THOMAS' DAY.

BY THE SAME.

When from their native Palestine
The twelve spread far and wide,
Alone he went from Salem's shrine
On to the Ganges' side ;
The green sward was his dying bed,
And from the crimson sod,
His blood, which Brahma's children shed,
Went reeking up to God.

On that foundation, long unsought
For eighteen hundred years,
A Middleton and Heber wrought,
And their successor rears ;
The Church for which his blood was spilt,
How can it be o'erthrown,
On prophets and apostles built,
With Christ the corner stone!

HYMN FOR ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.

BY THE SAME.

With awful dread his murderers shook,
As, radiant and serene,
The lustre of his dying look
Was like an angel's seen ;
Or Moses' face of paly light,
When down the mount he trod,
All glowing from the glorious sight
And interview of God.

To us, with all his constancy,
Be his rapt vision given,
To look above by faith, and see
Revealments bright of Heaven ;
And power to speak our triumphs out,
As our last hour draws near,
While neither clouds of fear nor doubt
Before our view appear.

SERMON X.

BY THE REV. GEORGE WASHINGTON DOANE, A. M.
Rector of Trinity Church, Boston.

THE REIGN OF HEAVEN.

MATTHEW VI. 10.

THY KINGDOM COME.

THE terms 'kingdom of God,' and 'kingdom of heaven,' equivalent to the expression in the text, 'thy kingdom,' are of very frequent recurrence in the scriptures, and especially in those of the New Testament. That they are not always used in the same signification, must be apparent to the most ordinary reader of the sacred volume. When it is said, for instance, in one place, 'that the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened'—in another, that 'the kingdom of heaven is like a net, cast into the sea, which gathered of every kind'—and in a third, 'know ye not that the unrighteous cannot inherit the kingdom of God?'—is it not obvious that in each of these cases the signification of the term is different? I have selected these three passages as illustrative of the *three* principal uses of the phrase. The *first*, the influence of heavenly principles, the principles of religion, 'the reign,' as it were, 'of heaven,' in the heart, aptly

* This sermon, originally preached in Trinity Church, Boston, as one of a course of sermons on the Lord's Prayer, was also delivered, by request, before the Episcopal Missionary Society of Maine, in Christ Church, Gardiner.

expressed by the 'leaven,' pervading the whole mass in which it is placed, and creating within it, when it was before dead and sluggish, a new and peculiar life. The *second*, the dispensation of the Gospel, the Christian Church, that spiritual society on earth, of which Jesus Christ is the head, into which, as men are admitted by baptism, on the profession of their faith, the bad may enter with the good, to be sorted and separated at the end of the world, when the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from the just. The *third*, the blessed and glorious state to which the righteous after death shall be admitted, when, freed from the troubling of the wicked, they shall enjoy perpetual rest and felicity in the presence of God—the Church once militant on earth having become, through the might of her Redeemer, the Church triumphant in the heavens. It is in the last of these uses of it, as expressive of the place or state of future happiness, that the phrase 'kingdom of heaven,' will most naturally, and by ordinary readers of the Scriptures, most frequently, be applied; the term 'kingdom,' being most commonly understood, in our language, of the *territory*, rather than of the *authority*, or *influence* of a king. To express the latter sense, which is clearly that of the two first cited passages, the word, '*reign*,' agreeing equally with the original, is, to an English ear, much better adapted—'the reign of heaven,' the influence of religion, in its application to the individual heart of the believer, is 'like leaven'—'the reign of heaven' upon earth, the Church, which is Christ's spiritual kingdom here below, is 'like a net cast into the sea, which gathereth of every kind.' It is when the individual believer, passing alike the present probation, and the future ordeal, of his faith, shall have been received at God's right hand, and, the purposes of the Gospel dispensation being fulfilled, the Church shall be exalted and glorified by the immediate enjoyment of the divine presence, that the term '*kingdom*,' in our sense of it, will become fully and literally appropriate, and 'the kingdom of God,' in heaven, constitute the home and the eternal happiness of the faithful followers of Jesus. The term, as it is employed in the text, is clearly comprehensive of these

three progressive meanings—so that when we say 'thy kingdom come,' we must be understood to desire, *first*, that the Christian religion, the influences of the celestial kingdom, now begun on earth, might more effectually rule in the hearts and lives of all those who profess themselves its subjects—*then*, that the number of them may be increased, by the diffusion of the Gospel, and the extension of the Church, to all those by whom they are not now professed and received—and, *finally*, that, the purposes of redemption being thus fully accomplished, God's kingdom would fully come, in the translation of all its faithful and obedient subjects to that high and holy place, in which the divine majesty essentially resides. In agreement with these views, the French translators of the Scriptures substitute in the present case, *reign*, for *kingdom*—their uniform version of the text being, 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; *may thy reign* come'—establish, Lord, in all our hearts, extend throughout all the world, the empire of thy heavenly grace—hasten, Lord, in thine own time, the empire of thy celestial glory!

'Thy kingdom come!'—There is a sense in which God's kingdom, his reign or empire, has from eternity existed, as Maker and Lord of all—and, especially, as the Creator and King of this material universe, of which we are, peradventure, but the smallest part. In this sense of it, the divine dominion is from everlasting to everlasting, is absolute, is irresistible. It cannot therefore be prayed for, as something future, but must be acknowledged with joy—for what greater blessing than to live beneath the sway of infinite wisdom, power, and love?—as actually present and supreme, 'the Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice!'—The kingdom here spoken of is God's *natural* kingdom or empire. It is his reign over the material world—by virtue of that Almighty power which, as it first produced it from nothing, so now it rules, upholds, and orders it, in all its parts, and properties, and purposes. The earth acknowledges its sway, when, in the fair vicissitudes of seasons and of years, stern winter chains her genial influences up, or when returning spring, with all the light and beauty of a new creation, fills the whole

air with balm, and all the land with bloom. The sea confesses it, the old unchanging sea, when in the bursting terrors of the storm, or in the sparkling of its "wild waves' play" upon the shore, it finds its ancient and perpetual barriers still the same—tossing itself, yet it cannot overpass them; roaring, yet it cannot prevail against them. And the high heavens proclaim it, when, obedient to the laws which he at first ordained, systems and suns pursue their glorious course—so wisely ordered, that from the time the morning stars first pealed their song of joy, the heavenly harmony has never been disturbed; so perfect in their time, that science, even human science, can foretell how often, in thrice three thousand years, the shadows of their glory will conflict, and find not even the variation of a single second in the whole magnificent result. So glorious in counsel, so wonderful in operation, is Jehovah of hosts! 'How great are his signs! How mighty are his wonders!' His kingdom of nature—is it not, compared with our brief span, 'an everlasting kingdom?' The dominion of his power and providence—is it not 'from generation to generation?'

But, besides his *natural* kingdom, absolute, irresistible, existing from eternity, there is another, a *moral* and *spiritual* kingdom, or empire, founded on the willing obedience of reasonable creatures—a 'reign of heaven,' to which, when it has been once authoritatively proclaimed, it is man's duty, without question, or controversy, to subject himself—an authority which cannot be resisted without sin, and yet, which man is absolutely free to receive, or to reject. Of this kingdom or reign, as God is the sovereign, graciously manifesting himself to men in acts of condescension and love, and soliciting their allegiance, not compelling it, so his revealed word, the BIBLE, the book of truth, the charter and covenant of promise, constitutes the statute law. John, sent of God, and promised, almost by name, seven hundred years before, proclaimed the coming or commencement of this reign, when, in the wilderness of Jordan, a voice was heard, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!' It was proclaimed by Jesus, when, at the commencement of his

wondrous, self-denying ministry, he took up the strain which murmured from the dying lips of John, and preached, saying 'Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!' It is for this *spiritual* kingdom, the reign of grace, the dispensation of the Gospel, the empire of heaven in human hearts, swaying them to holiness, ruling them in peace, guiding them to heaven —it is for this that we are taught to pray, 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come!'

But we are told, that it has come. Jesus proclaimed it in his life. Jesus founded and cemented it with his blood. Jesus, by the gift of the divine Spirit, accomplished it, and gave it perpetuity. True, it has begun to come. The gospel dispensation is in course of proclamation to the kingdoms and nations of the whole world. The CHURCH, divinely established, divinely preserved, divinely governed, opens wide her doors, for the reception of all who will come in to her, and be at peace. She is complete in her divine head, Jesus, the Son of God. She is complete in her officers, the successors of the apostles, whom Jesus himself sent. The Gospel is her divine law. The Sacraments are the divinely appointed seals of her present privileges, and of her future promises. Christian believers are her subjects—'members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven.' Still it has by no means come in that extent, and to that effect, which we are authorized to anticipate, and for which we are encouraged to pray. God's name is not yet known among the Gentiles 'from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same,' nor is there yet offered, in every place, unto his name, 'incense and a pure offering.' 'The kingdoms of this world' are not all become—nay, but the smaller portion of them have become—'the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.' Of the whole race of mankind, *more than three fourths* still grope among the idolatries of Paganism, the errors of Judaism, or the delusions of the false Prophet. Grievous errors divide, distract, and corrupt the little Christian flock—and even among them of the purest faith, where the light of truth shines brightest, and the Gospel trumpet gives the least

uncertain sound, there is so much of deadness in devotion, so much of conformity to the world, and so much of viciousness of living, that though the kingdom of God is visibly among them, they themselves are far away from it—exposed to the danger, as they realize the description, of those 'children of the kingdom,' who, for insincerity and unfaithfulness, were to see many coming 'from the east and from the west,' to sit down 'with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,' and be themselves 'cast out into outer darkness.' In view of these things, is there less propriety—may I not almost ask, is there less necessity—to offer now, than when it was first dictated, the prayer of the text? Whether we regard the feeble sway which it exerts in our own hearts, or the slow progress which it makes in the world, or the thick clouds which hide from all of us the issues of the dark, the distant, the eternal future, does it not become us all, with holy fervor, when we pray, to say, 'Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come?'

'Thy kingdom come!'—We offer this petition, *first*, for ourselves, humbly desiring that the reign of God may rule in all our hearts, subduing every thought and desire to the obedience of Christ, and regulating our whole life, in all its actions and relations, by its pure and perfect laws. In all his dealings with mankind, God treats with them as with free moral agents. He reveals himself to them, he proclaims his will, he declares their duty, he proposes its reward. Whether they will comply or not with the conditions offered, rests with them. All may. Of none, is it declared, 'he must!' The allegiance of the divine kingdom must be voluntary, to be accepted. The homage and the tribute in which God takes pleasure, are hearts willingly offered, lives freely given up. Pardon for all sin is, indeed, proclaimed to all, through the atoning merits of Jesus, the Son of God—and the Apostle thence infers an argument of *constraining* love. 'For the love of Christ constraineth us,' he says—'because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all,' not to exempt any from obedience, but 'that they who live, should not henceforth live unto them-

selves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.' But the constraint of love—who does not know?—is no constraint at all; consistent, not only with the most perfect freedom, but, at the same time, the most powerful motive to exertion, and its best rewards. *Fear*, too, the fear of forfeiting God's favor, and of incurring the punishments that are reserved for sin, is, in the Gospel, frequently appealed to, to arouse the sinner, and to stimulate the faithful. But so far from being the odious fear of cowards and of slaves, the mere brute fear of bodily suffering, it is the fear of a dutiful child to offend a kind and generous father—the prudent fear of a wise man lest his own life be rashly jeopardized —the instinctive shuddering of true honor at the mere thought of meanness or injustice, at the thought of standing self-convicted, before angels and all worlds, of disrespect and ingratitude to the Sovereign of the universe, our Father who is in Heaven.— *The Holy Spirit*, too, the Scripture teaches us, is sent into our hearts, to convince us of sin, to direct us to the path of duty, to influence our affections to delight in, and our wills to pursue it, to sanctify us wholly, and to preserve us blameless, our whole spirit, and soul, and body, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But its influences move, not compel, us. It leads us by motives and persuasion, not by impulses and violence. It is 'the love of God, shed abroad in our hearts,' it is 'the spirit of adoption,' whereby, feeling that we are sons, not slaves, we are enabled and encouraged to say, 'Abba, Father?' Such is the nature, such are the conditions, of that spiritual reign, the dispensation of divine grace in the hearts of men, proclaimed in the Gospel of salvation. To offer in regard to it the prayer of the text, 'thy kingdom come,' is to declare, under circumstances the most solemn, and in the most explicit terms, our willing, and, since no man can owe fealty to two sovereigns, our undivided allegiance. And, in addition to this, it is to desire of him, in words which his own Son hath taught us—which to offer with insincerity therefore is to profane—that he would extend and establish in our hearts the empire of his holiness, bring them more and more in subjection to his laws, animate them more and more

with the disposition to do his will, withdraw them more and more from the control of earthly things, and strengthen and increase in them continually desires to be with him, and to be like him. Is it not, brethren, to pledge ourselves that the power which we invoke to aid us, we will not ourselves resist? Is it not to promise, sacredly, before God, that the authority which we invite, we will, with our best powers, obey? When the temptations of the world, then, and the lying vanities of life, strive to withdraw us from the service of the living God, can we doubt how we shall choose between them? When, from on high, the summons to our hearts calls, to go on steadfastly and uprightly in the path of duty, can we hesitate to obey? When, from among the lively emblems of the Saviour's bleeding love, the lingering accents of his last request invite us to commemorate with him, and with all saints, the painful purchase of our present freedom and our future hopes, can we refuse to hear, can we refuse to come? Ah, brethren, if we *can*—can doubt, can hesitate, can refuse—*can* we say, *ought* we to say, 'thy kingdom come?'

'Thy kingdom come!'—We offer this petition, in the *second* place, for others, less favored than ourselves. That which a good man prizes most, he most earnestly desires that others should also enjoy. The philanthropist would not possess his plenty, nor the patriot his liberty, alone. He would diffuse them wide as the genial sun, or as 'the casing air.' He finds—O blessed paradox!—that of all he ever had, that which he gave to others is the most his own. He feels—O admirable mystery!—that as the glorious heritage of freedom is enjoyed by more, it is enjoyed more richly by himself. Now, as the immortal transcends the mortal, as the soul's freedom is more glorious than the body's, so must the true Christian, in his desire that the reign of righteousness and salvation be extended to the whole world, exceed the desires of all other philanthropists, and of all other patriots. Like his divine Master, he 'would have all men to be saved.' Like his divine Master, he takes pity on the nations that are famishing for the bread of life. Like his divine Master, he has compassion on the multitudes, whom he

sees, at home, abroad—no matter where, in the wide neighborhood of the world—wandering, 'as sheep without a shepherd.' Like his divine Master, indeed, he cannot work a miracle for their spiritual sustenance; and if, like him, he should lay down 'his life for the sheep,' the poor offering would be nothing worth. But instructed by him, and in his own most gracious and prevailing words, he can pour out his fervent and effectual prayer—'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come!' O gracious Maker and Preserver of mankind, let 'thy way be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations!'—Brethren, does not this prayer include all else that we can do? Does not God's reign extend itself by human instruments and human means? Did not the apostles, sent by Christ, begin, and must not others, 'of like passions,' carry on, and, under God, complete the glorious work? And must it not be done at your cost, with your help, with your influence? *Yours*, did I say, when all you have, and all you are, is God's? With the wealth,—I meant to say—the wisdom, the influence, which God, for his own purposes, has *lent* you! And dare you, can you, will you—is there a man that dare, that can, that will—insult the Lord of heaven and earth, by praying that his kingdom on earth may come, while he does nothing, gives nothing, says nothing, to promote its coming—while his hand clings, as with a death-grasp, to the gold that might supply ten thousand famishing souls, and conceals and turns away from them the light with which God has put him in trust, and which, poured out upon the groping nations, would turn all their darkness into meridian day? Ah, brethren, let not the hinderer of the word of truth, let not the hoarder up of what the treasury of the Lord demands, let not the laggard in the cause of God, and of his Church, presume to say, 'thy kingdom come!'

'Thy kingdom come!'—We offer this petition, in the *third* place, for ourselves, and all mankind, and for the glory of God, in the consummation of his plans of providence and grace. It is the promise which cheers and shall reward the faithful in

Christ Jesus, that neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived the things which God hath reserved for those who love him. The stupendous scheme of redemption, the glorious universal Church of the Redeemer here on the earth, is but the vestibule, they know, to the triumphant 'Church of the first born' in heaven. Willing, therefore, as they must be, to stand and serve here, in the lower courts of their Father's house, until the summons of return shall come, it is but natural that eyes and thoughts and heart should be turned upward to the heavenly mansions—and that, with David, panting after God, 'as the hart after the water brooks,' and, with Paul, desiring 'to depart, and be with Christ,' they should, from the full heart, pour out the Saviour's prayer, 'thy kingdom come!'—'O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O Lord!' —But, brethren, is there no danger that we may urge this prayer in our own wrong? Are we prepared, are we prepared, to meet our God? When he comes, let us all remember, he comes to separate between the righteous and the wicked—between them that have done good, and them that have done evil! Have we endeavored, by faith, and penitence, and love, to make our calling sure? Are we living now as men who love his appearing? 'Who may abide the day of his coming?' 'Who'—let each ask it of his own heart!—'who shall stand when he appeareth?' May God, in infinite mercy, give us all the grace to do so, for his dear Son's sake. And to Him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, three persons, and one God, shall be the glory and the praise!

SERMON XI.

BY THE REV. ABRAHAM BRONSON, A. M.
Rector of Zion's Church, Manchester, Vermont.

THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL.

ROMANS I. 16.

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST; FOR IT IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION, TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH, TO THE JEW FIRST, AND ALSO TO THE GREEK.

When St Paul was writing to the Romans, he exerted all his powers to make a full display of the gospel system, to illustrate its peculiar doctrines, and from them to deduce and enforce its practical precepts. As Rome was then the seat of power and learning, he adapted his discourse to the capacity of his hearers, and reasoned profoundly upon the holy faith. As there were already some christians at that place, he first mentioned his desire to visit them, 'that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift,—or rather, that he and they might comfort one another by their mutual faith.' His ministry having been successful among other nations, 'he was ready, as far as he was able, to preach the gospel at Rome also.' He was 'not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it was the power of God unto salvation,to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.'—In his subsequent discourse he shows, with sufficient plainness, why he was not, and others should not be, ashamed of the gospel.

I. The first reason, which he gives at large, is, that the gospel is necessary in order to men's salvation.—This necessity he proves from *reason* and from *revelation*.

As God is a being of infinite purity, his laws must be perfectly pure, and must require constant and perfect obedience. It would be inconsistent with the holiness of his nature to make laws, which should give any license to sin. In his view the smallest transgression is evil. The smallest wrong action or disposition is contrary to his law, and of course sinful in his sight. As then he views all sin with abhorrence, every fault, of whatever degree, is in its own nature sufficient to exclude a man from his favor. According to the eternal principles of justice, whoever deviates at all, becomes guilty.—And as a man can at no time do more than his duty, he cannot make amends for his past fault. It is his duty, for instance, to love God supremely at all times. Now if he fails of doing this at one time, he cannot do more than this at another time, and so can never atone for his past neglect. The law then, in its own nature, will forever exclude men from the enjoyment of God.

The same truth appears from *divine revelation*.—'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.' Our first parents sinned, and fell, and could never have been delivered without a Mediator. So their descendants 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,'and can be 'justified only through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.'—Such was the case with the *Gentiles*, as represented in this first chapter. Though they had received no written law, yet the works of creation and providence were before them to teach them their duty, so that they had no excuse for disobedience. The light of nature sufficiently proved, that there was a God, and that they ought to serve him. Yet 'they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.' 'They worshipped and served the creature, more than the Creator.' Not an individual among the heathen ever regulated his disposition and conduct exactly according to the best light that was afforded him; and therefore not one of them could be justified by his own righteousness. No man can be justified by a law, if he has ever broken it. And as all the Gentiles have transgressed even the law of nature, they

are condemned by it; and, as far as concerns the law, they must stand condemned at the judgment day.—From this condemnation the *Jews* might imagine they should escape, because they had a law revealed to them from heaven, and were called God's peculiar people. But the apostle teaches them in the next chapter, that they have no reason to boast. Though a law had been given them from heaven, yet 'through breaking the law they had dishonored God,'—insomuch that 'his name was blasphemed among the Gentiles' by means of their sins. They brought disgrace upon the law, as many members of the christian church do upon the gospel, by neglecting its commands. There was not one individual perfectly holy among all the tribes of Israel. The very men, who dispensed the law, did not yield it a perfect obedience. The judges and prophets in different ages had come short; they were all sinners in the eye of the law, and could not merit salvation by their own works. Even those saints, who 'walked in all the commandments and ordinances blameless,' were required to offer sacrifice; which would not have been necessary, unless they had sinned. Thus St Paul declares, in the third chapter, 'that the Jews are no better than the Gentiles,'—'none righteous, no not one.' 'Every mouth must be stopped, and all the world be acknowledged guilty before God.'—Even *we that live under the light of the gospel*, are by nature in the same condemnation. There is not one among us, that has 'made his way perfect before God,'—not one that has always fulfilled his whole duty. When our Lord said, 'Let him that is without sin cast the first stone,' the people were all convicted by their own consciences, and no stone was thrown at the offender. So if every one would let conscience speak, we should need no other answer. The heart of the best man would plead guilty. The best man would confess and lament his errors, his faults, his sins,—would acknowledge that he has broken the law, that he has no merit to atone for his sins, and that he must depend entirely upon divine mercy for pardon and acceptance.—Thus the law can justify no man, because no man fulfils it. 'God hath concluded all under sin;' 'by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight.'

From these considerations we learn the necessity of the gospel dispensation. All have fallen under the sentence of the law; and none could be saved, were it not for the mercy that is offered in Christ Jesus. The sin could not be done away without satisfaction, and no man could make satisfaction for his sin; of course a system of grace must be instituted, or no man could ever be saved. 'If there had been a law, which could have given life, then righteousness, or justification, might have been by the law.' But as all are transgressors, there can be no justification but through a covenant of grace. Such a covenant is set forth in the gospel. Those who 'have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, may be justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, for the remission of sins.' Here is the essence and glory of the gospel,—'that God may be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.' As 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,' we are now under a gracious dispensation, which offers pardon of sin to all who repent and embrace the gospel.

This is not such a covenant as will save men, if they continue obstinate in their sins; if it were, I imagine the apostle would have been ashamed of it. But he was not ashamed of the real gospel of Christ,—not ashamed of that divine institution, 'which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.' He was not ashamed of that gospel, 'which established the law,' instead of doing away its sanctions, and which saves men by reforming their hearts, and uniting them in faith and holiness to the Lord Jesus Christ. Of such a gospel he could make his boast. He could boast of a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, and of a dispensation intended to save men by bringing them to repentance and newness of life.

II. Another reason for not being ashamed of the gospel is, that its benefits are offered to all mankind,—'to every one that believeth, whether Jew or Gentile.'

The Jews were once the chosen people, favored with the

divine oracles, and with many other privileges above the rest of mankind. 'Jacob was loved, and Esau was hated,' without any regard to the 'good or evil,' which they might do. That is, the posterity of Jacob should be favored with greater means of spiritual improvement, than the posterity of Esau, or any other people.—But this distinction was to be done away at the coming of Christ. 'There is now no difference,'—as the apostle says in the tenth chapter,—'no difference between Jew and Greek; but the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Jesus offered himself as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and as a ransom for all. His atonement, being made by an infinite and divine Being, was of infinite value; it was general; it was abundantly sufficient for every individual of the human race. His merits are an inexhaustible fountain of grace and salvation.

The calls of the gospel are given to all, inviting all to come and receive the blessing. Everything is offered freely, pardon and grace, without money and without price. 'Whosoever will may come, and take the water of life freely.'—True, the word has not yet extended,—the gospel has not been preached,—among all nations. But the spirit has been diffused, and has in some measure exerted its influence in every human being. In that respect all have the offer of salvation; and we may hope, that many, who never heard the Saviour's name in this world, have yet repented of their sins, and become spiritually united to him through the power of his grace.

But let us always remember, that the final blessing will be bestowed upon none but those, who repent and believe the gospel. 'The power of God unto salvation is only to those who believe;'—only to those, who have become convinced of their lost condition,—have lamented their sins, fled to Jesus for mercy, and had 'his love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost.' True faith implies the whole of this gracious work, as also an earnest endeavor, in all things, to do the divine will.

Of such a gospel as this, offering its salutary favors to all returning sinners, we need none of us be ashamed. We may

rather glory in that divine goodness, which is so extensively displayed, and which has such a powerful tendency to lead men to repentance and salvation. As the offer of deliverance is made to all, we should not be ashamed of the threatenings, which are denounced to alarm the impenitent. If any refuse the offer, and finally perish in their sins, we may lament their melancholy *fate*, but must not be ashamed of the justice that condemns them. It would be inconsistent with the divine character to save impenitent sinners; and therefore we must not be ashamed of the terrors of the law, any more than we are of the mercies of the gospel.

III. A third reason why we should not be ashamed of the gospel, is the purity and exellence of its precepts.—These are set forth in the latter part of this epistle to the Romans. In the twelfth chapter especially there is a summary of christian duty, so concisely and so forcibly expressed, that it has always been considered, not only as a most excellent persuasive to christian virtue, but as a masterpiece of literary composition. The style is plain and simple and *forcible*,—every precept full of meaning, and like an ingot of pure gold, capable of being drawn out into an extensive compass. The more this passage is examined—the more plain will its force and beauty appear. 'Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love—in honor preferring one another—not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord:—rejoicing in hope,—patient in tribulation,—continuing instant in prayer,—distributing to the necessity of saints,—given to hospitality. Bless them that persecute you;—bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice; and weep with them that weep. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.' In a similar strain the apostle proceeds through this and the following chapter. He enjoins forgiveness and beneficence to enemies, submission to lawful authorities, and rendering unto all their dues. And finally he closes by exhorting us to 'cast off the works of darkness,' even all sin,' and to put on the armor of light,' even all righteousness, '—to walk hon-

estly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and enraging,—but to 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ,'—follow him in newness of life.—Such are the pure and holy precepts exhibited in the gospel, and most powerfully and eloquently enforced in this epistle to the Romans.

And here let us notice the order of gospel doctrine and duty, as here stated by the apostle. First he speaks of the general sinfulness of man. Then he declares the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and the justification which the sinner can receive by believing in him. Next he mentions the peace of conscience and holiness of disposition, that flow from these exalted privileges. And lastly he enlarges upon the moral virtues, that should adorn the christian life. It is by faith that the sinner is justified ;—but it must be such a faith as works by love, purifies the heart, and regulates the conduct, or it will not unite the soul to the Saviour, nor prepare it for his presence in glory.

And now, my hearers, from the whole tenor of our subject, we learn what is our situation and what is the way before us. Every careless sinner is in a state of condemnation before God, Every one that has not felt himself lost and depraved, as the gospel represents him,—every one that has not humbly loathed and abhorred his sins, and fled to the Saviour as the only refuge, has no inheritance in heaven. He is an outcast from the favor of God, and on the way to everlasting perdition.—And are not some of *us* in this situation ?—Let every one inquire of his own heart.—Yes, some of us are alienated from God, having no love to him, no humble trust in the Lord Jesus, and no delight in his service. And if they continue thus, they can have no part nor lot in his salvation.—Let every careless soul be awakened. Let every impenitent sinner be alarmed. Let him feel, that the gospel will not save him, unless he humbly repents of his sins, and exercises such a humble faith in the merits and grace of Christ, as will overcome the world, and lead to all holiness of life. Let him examine himself, cast himself entirely upon the Saviour, and be ever employed in doing his will and preparing for his kingdom.

PROVIDENCE.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM CROSWELL.

The lilied fields behold !
What king in his array
Of purple pall, and cloth of gold,
Shines gorgeously as they ?
Alas ! however gay,
Their pomp is brief as bright,
It lives but for a summer's day,
And withers in a night.

If God so clothe the soil
And glorify the dust,
Why should the slave of daily toil
His providence distrust ?
Will He, whose love has nursed
The sparrow's brood, do less
For those who seek his kingdom first,
And with it righteousness ?

The birds fly forth at will,
They neither plough nor sow,
Yet theirs the sheaves that crown the hill,
Or glad the vale below.
While through the realms of air
He guides their trackless way,
Will faithless man alone despair ?
Is he worth less than they ?

SERMON XII.

BY THE RT. REV. THEODORE DEHON, D. D.
Late Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina.

THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE.

REVELATIONS xxi, 7.

HE THAT OVERCOMETH SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS.

THE amiable John, is well known to Christians, as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Blessed with longer life than any of his colleagues, he was towards the close of it, distinguished by his Friend with some very honorable and extraordinary communications. An exile in the isle of Patmos, he was visited by his Lord; and, wrapped on the wings of vision, was carried into heaven, to admire its splendid arrangements, and to be made acquainted with things which were to come. For the glory of God, and the benefit of man, he recorded what he saw; and in his apocalypse, has stored such information, as no other mortal was permitted to acquire. But like the book seen in the hand of God, this is hard to be opened; and none perhaps will be able to unloose all its seals, till "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" shall universally prevail, and exhibit in his church triumphant, satisfactory illustration of all its mysteries. Still it is to be read and studied by Christians. "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." It is commendable to be found investigating the deep things which the Most High has revealed; it is right to be waiting at the pool, if perchance the angel may move the waters. The parts of the Revelation, which have had their accomplishment, may be understood by the diligent; and written for general improvement, it abounds with interesting descriptions, instructive allusions, and plain moral declarations. Such evidently is the passage which I

have selected for the subject of your present meditations. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." It is intelligible to all, and contains truths of as apt and important nature, as any we can contemplate.

In discoursing from it, it shall be my endeavor to shew, in the First place, what it is which we should overcome.

Secondly, to adduce the considerations, which should animate us to the discharge of this duty,

And, Thirdly, to recommend some rules for rendering the conflict easy and successful.

To overcome, implies an active, persevering, and effectual struggle. As such the Scriptures frequently represent the Christian's life. Every disciple of the Redeemer is enlisted under the banners of a chief, in defence of a cause against numerous and obstinate foes. He has a race to run, a warfare to conduct. Whatever is opposed to the spirit of the gospel, whatever comes in competition with the interests of religion, whatever thwarts or injures virtue, is to be vanquished and held in subjection. With every obstacle to purity and piety, he is perseveringly to struggle; for to yield, is desertion, and to desert, is death. In order, therefore, to understand what we are to overcome, we must ascertain the sources, whence opposition is made to our progress and perfection in the path of duty.—These are;

In the first place, a natural aversion from spiritual truth. The mind of man in its original state, found its chief pleasure in the contemplation of God, his moral government, and the rules flowing from spiritual relations. At the fall it became carnal. All relish for the truths of religion gradually was lost; and that which was its proper object became unpleasant. No longer does he find his best gratification, in contemplating and conversing with the Deity. No longer does he take delight in listening to the doctrines of religion. No longer does he find his highest satisfaction in those truths which affect only his soul. Reason grown self-sufficient, cannot readily humble herself to receive revealed instruction; and nature, made proud by her abasement, resents the men-

tion of her helplessness and depravity. The mind scorns truths, which it cannot comprehend; and attention is with difficulty induced to hearken to doctrines, whose nature is spiritual, and which respect an unseen world. It is this aversion from religious truths, partly owing to pride of mind, and partly to depravity of heart, which prevents many from entering the Christian career; and renders many who have entered, ignorant, or offended at the very essential and peculiar principles of their religion. To encourage and preserve this aversion from things spiritual; to engage the mind in doubting, disputing, and new modelling the doctrines of revelation; to hold, or distract, or beguile attention, when it would employ itself upon God, religion or the duties of devotion, is the artifice of the grand adversary, who first seduced man, and is constantly laboring to confirm his ruin. This is a most powerful obstacle to our religious progress; this we must overcome. We must conquer our propensity to hurry from the plain dry truths of religion, or to warp them to our own feelings and opinions. We must reduce our minds to their original spirituality, and struggle till we recover our appetite for the pleasures of religion. We must watch the wiles of the devil to deter us from coveting truth, break the fetters with which he would confine our minds to airy visions, and vanquish his constant efforts to hold us in bondage. In doing this, we shall defeat the boldest foe of our Redeemer, and most successfully overcome one principal impediment to our attainment of religious excellence, aversion from revealed truth.

Another source of opposition to our progress and perfection in the path of duty, is found in the allurements of the world. Things seen and present, most easily entice the affections from things unseen and future. We early enter the world. Its pleasures dazzle. Its pursuits gratify. Its business engages. Its examples affect. We conform to its customs, its opinions, its vices. We become slaves to the world. A thousand objects struggle for that ardent love, which undivided should be given to God. A thousand pursuits occupy

those faculties, which should be employed in recovering the dignity of our nature. A thousand pleasures engross the attention of that soul, which is immortal, and has eternal happiness to secure. But few of these objects, but few of these pursuits, but few of these pleasures, have any reference to our most important, our *only* important concerns. On the contrary, they wind themselves into our bosoms, and leave no room for matters of more consequence. By monopolizing our attention, the best of them interfere with the main business of life. When infatuated with the riches, honors, and pleasures of the world, seldom and cursorily do we think of the things which belong to our eternal peace. By their evil properties and trifling nature, many of them enfeeble our noblest powers, and corrupt the heart. How few pass through the world without contagion, and carry out of it that portion of purity, with which, though the children of corruption, they were born. By drawing to earth, while religion beckons to heaven, they all prove obstacles to our spiritual progress and perfection. "We cannot serve God and Mammon." On these accounts, the scriptures exhort, "be not conformed to the world;" "love not the world, nor the things of the world," for "the friendship of the world is enmity with God." On these accounts, the Saviour when on earth lived unattached to its pleasures or pursuits, and marked with contempt its pomps and vanities. On these accounts, whosoever is born of God, and enjoys the promise in the text, must overcome the world. We are not, however, to understand by overcoming the world, a sullen contempt, a morose neglect of it. Nothing like this. It is at present our place of abode; and there are in it, objects which ought to interest, and enjoyments which ought to please us. All that is required is, that we do not covet its sinful, nor its artificial joys; that we do not consider any of its pleasures or pursuits as the prime object of our existence; that we conform to no one of its customs, at the expense of virtue; that when any of its allurements offers itself in preference to the promises of religion, we resist it with resolution and rise above it; that, in the lan-

guage of inspiration, "they who have wives, be as though they had not, they who weep as though they wept not, they who rejoice as though they rejoiced not, they who buy as though they possessed not, and they who use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."

Another very powerful impediment which we must overcome, is the system of vicious tendencies, the "body of sin," which we inherit from the first human pair. We must not only overcome our aversion from religion and the allurements of the world, we must "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts." In ourselves, lie obstinate enemies which we must subdue; in ourselves, we shall find the sources of most dangerous temptations. When man was first formed, his frame was void of guilt. His soul immaculate, pursued only its noble objects. His will unperverted, inclined only to goodness. His natural and necessary appetites, preserved the sphere, in which they were formed to operate. Innocence and harmonious subordination reigned in his nature, and not a movement of his affections, but displayed virtue. Alas, the spoiler came. His nature was rifled of its excellence. Vice fixed her residence in the human heart. Subverting the subordination ordained by God, she has made the soul a menial to the body; and this is pampered, while that is scarcely known. Destroying the restraints of reason, she has left the appetites loose; which like slaves possessed of usurped power, drag down in deep disgrace the rulers which once kept them in a useful sphere, and destroy the nature they were formed to preserve. To secure her empire, she has implanted in the bosom vile and malignant passions, as pride, malice, envy, selfishness, and many others, which constantly oppose and cramp the efforts of virtue to recover her lost influence. In short, she has so confused the order of nature, and so corrupted man, that virtue sometimes has to struggle for her very existence with lusts and passions, which spring forth unexpected, resisting the reproofs of reason, and unintimidated by the threats of remorse. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh;" and these,

though formed in the most perfect union, are now, "contrary the one to the other." In order to re-establish virtue in man, and to restore to him his loveliness; to render him worthy of that divine favor he has forfeited; this empire of vice must be broken; we must subdue "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;" all the guards, the stratagems, the forces of sin, must be defeated; we must overcome our lusts, our passions, our affections, ourselves. This is not so hard a duty, as one at first thought would imagine. We are not required to eradicate the passions interwoven in our very nature, to deny our bodies all gratification, to hate and abandon ourselves. Religion is not so austere. She is a reasonable instructress. To overcome, is not to destroy. She only requires, that we have, and keep them under command; that we restore the empire to virtue; that we "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth most easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us." With the passions and propensities which debase the divine image in the soul, she would have us unceasingly struggle; and rather wear out life in the conflict, than not to overcome. She would have the body kept under, and brought into subjection; the passions obedient to control; and the whole system disciplined, like the corps of the centurion, who says to one "go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh, and to his servant do this, and he doeth it."

Lastly, in order to inherit the promise in the text, we must overcome the vexations and troubles of life. Here is the patience of the saints. These are most painful struggles. We must not only encounter enemies, but meet obstacles, as we journey through life. The road will sometimes be rough and uneasy; the weather dull, if not stormy. Here virtue must hold an arduous conflict, and needs the aid of her most powerful forces. Strong are the temptations of adversity. They disturb the quiet and piety of the soul, when others fail. They urge to discontent, to distrust of divine Providence, to weariness of being, to neglect of active duties, to depravation of heart and life. If afflictions do not reform, they are apt to

harden vice. When they do not invigorate, they depress virtue. Like heavy rains, they sometimes drench the plant they should nourish; and unless properly conducted, spread devastation. When the arch fiend wished to overthrow the piety and integrity of Job, he chose these weapons for the assault. "Doth Job fear God for nought. Put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." His patience blazoned his worth, and strengthened all the excellencies of his life. In surmounting the difficulties and distresses of this state, many of the sacred heroes struggled and triumphed. The Author of our faith, encountered all the ills of mortality; and faithful to the end, was perfected through suffering. His disciples, in common with others, will have their difficulties. They must encounter too, the ridicule and scorn of the profane. The badge of their profession is a cross. These all will strive to rout the man from his strong hold; but with steadfastness they must be vanquished. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world!"

But the second thing proposed is, to adduce the considerations, which should animate us in the conduct of this warfare.

In the first place, we have devoted ourselves to it as Christians. One main object of the Messiah's mission, was to destroy the works of the devil, and restore to our nature that purity and dignity, with which it was vested in the morning of creation. Connected with this, was the glorious design of ransoming us from death, and securing to us the inheritance of eternal life and blessedness. To promote these purposes of divine love, we are engaged, both by our interest and our vows. If life and happiness be valuable, we cannot but feel concerned for our salvation. If a covenant with the Most High be sacred, we are obligated to fight manfully under the banner of his Son. Enlisted as we are under the Redeemer, and for the accomplishment of such interesting objects, shall we make any compromise with his adversaries? Shall we be slaves to that body of sin which he came to subdue? Shall we yield to those allurements of the world, which

he condemned as counteracting the effects of his love? Shall we be vanquished, by the troubles and vexations of life, when he, the "Captain" of our hopes, endured the cross? Where is our courage; where is our loyalty to our Lord; where is our virtue; if after having put our hands to the plough we look back? How are we good soldiers in our Master's cause, if whenever the struggle becomes difficult, we temporize, or quit the field? We may choose whom we will serve; but if the Lord be our God, we must follow him. He is a great and gracious God, and we cannot consistently with fidelity to him, be cold to encounter, or slow to resist, whatever is opposed to the cause he has in hand. How shall we ever adopt the Christian's triumph, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," without having known a conflict, or gained a victory? We may call ourselves Christians. We may hope to enjoy the benefits of the blessed name. But says our Lord, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Another consideration which should animate us in our Christian warfare, is, that it is promotive of our present happiness. If we trace the evils of life to their source, we shall find that they all, from the troubles which harrass whole nations, to the secret circumstances which distress individuals, proceed from one, or other of these things, which the Christian is required to overcome. Whence arise those mistakes in the paths, and that dissatisfaction with the aspect of life, which are often the foundation of a misery that nothing can remove? Do they not proceed from that aversion to spiritual pursuits, which keeps men ignorant of Deity and the principles of his government, and unacquainted with the excellent things of his law? Whence arise our cares, our perplexities, our disappointments, and chagrins? Do they not proceed from affections too fondly occupied with the things of the world? As it respects our actual necessities,

"Man wants but little, nor that little long."

But by creating artificial desires and expectations, by yielding to the influence of ambition, pride and vanity, we expose

ourselves to endless toils, and innumerable vexations. He who follows the world in its vain allurements, must in the end find, that he has followed an empty, capricious, transient shadow, seemingly real, but always delusive in the grasp. Whence arise those feelings, which disturb the even quiet of the soul; those sensations of langor and compunction, which are incompatible with positive felicity; those gnawings of remorse, which consume the vitals of peace; and that debility of soul and body, which is misery, while life lasts and hastens death? Do not all these sources of unhappiness proceed from ungoverned passions, or indulged lusts? Ask the angry man, what has been the spring of his most frequent sorrow? He will tell you the reflections of his mind, when he has contemplated cooly the ravages of his passion. Look at the man, who has given loose to all his desires, and indulged himself intemperately in sensual pleasures. He need not tell you, for you will quickly discern, that the fruit of his folly, is misery and shame. Whence arise those immoderate griefs, which acknowledge no joy; and fretting under every application, scarcely yield to the all-healing hand of time? Do they not proceed from hearts unbowed to the will of heaven; untaught to bear with patience the troubles and vexations which cannot be avoided? Now these various sources of our misery, are the very sources of opposition to our Christian progress. Religion requires us to overcome nothing, which is not as much the foe of our temporal happiness, as of our virtue and future hopes. Besides, there is a delight in the very act of conquest, which abundantly recompenses the arduousness of the conflict. The finest sensations of felicity, are those of virtue triumphant. They gratify the only worthy pride; they please the noblest desires of nature. The possessor of the most perfect satisfaction, is undoubtedly he, who at the bar of conscience, contemplating the follies of the world, the allurements of vice, the vexations of life, can say, through grace, I have overcome them all.

Again. We should be animated in this warfare, by the great and glorious examples which are in our view. What

can be more encouraging than to know, that others have engaged in the same conflict with ourselves, and have come off victorious? And who are these, that have been before us in this course, and are standing triumphant at the goal? They are the friends of God, the worthies of our race. We are not alone in this warfare. It has been the cause of the good in every age. Think of the faith of Abraham, of the righteousness of Noah, of the purity of Joseph, of the patience of Job, of the hardihood of Paul, of the heavenly mildness of St. John. Think of Moses, and Samuel, of David, and Elijah, of Daniel, and of all the prophets. Observe the greatness of their character, the loveliness of their virtues, and the success of their perseverance. Through difficulties as great as we can encounter, they have been conquerors, and obtained the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. Who would not be of their glorious company? What laurels so enviable, as those they won! Who that contrasts them with the motley children of the world, would not prefer, before all others, the path they have chosen, and persevere in it, till with them, he "inherits the promises?" But above all these, "look unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith;" who combining in himself all their trials and all their virtues, "tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin," "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Contemplating this host of worthies, with the Son of God at their head, the Christian may well deem his cause a happy and an honorable one, and gather fresh vigor from their success. For this, the Spirit of the Most High, hath preserved their memories, and recorded their histories, that we should take courage from their examples, and count it a felicity to be in the same field, contending for the same interests with "the Church of the first born."

Another consideration to animate us in our warfare, may be drawn from the assistance which is offered us by the Spirit of God. We are liable to be disheartened by the sense of our feebleness, and the greatness of our work. To conquer propensities born in us; to subdue our wills and affections to the mysterious decrees of heaven; to withstand the solicita-

tions of the world, which come under forms so fascinating, and have so many advocates within us, amidst the difficulties and darkness of this perplexed life; to preserve our faith unmoved, yea, without murmuring or repining to bear its amazing troubles; these are arduous duties; and if we were left to ourselves, they justly might dismay us. With the apostle, we might well exclaim, "who is sufficient for these things?" But difficulties are greater or less, according to the means of surmounting them. The Spirit of God, we may readily conceive, is adequate to any difficulty. His power, however imperceptibly operating upon us, may support us in every danger, and carry us through every trial of life.

Now this Spirit is the Christian's perpetual ally. In his warfare, he has always this Almighty aid. If he be weak, his God is strong. Greater is the power that is with him, than all the powers which can be against him. Add to this, the Saviour's constant intercession with the Father; and the Father's engagement, that if we are faithful to ourselves, we shall not be brought into trials greater than we are able to bear. The assurance of these, joined to a consciousness of his own faith and love, filled St. Paul with an animating persuasion, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, should be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I would adduce another motive to animate us in our Christian course, from the recollection of those who are witnesses of it. I speak not of the world, nor of the visible Church, which may profit, or be injured by our example. There are higher parties to the scene. We are not merely a spectacle unto men, but unto heavenly powers. What spirits, or how many walk, unseen amongst us, taking notice of our conduct, we are unable to ascertain. But of this we are assured, that God and his angels are spectators of our probation. I say the angels, "for are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation?" The

heavenly host, we are told, encamp around the just; and when the weight of woe, to which our Lord had humbly submitted himself, was becoming too heavy for his human nature to sustain, one of their exalted number was sent to strengthen him. Nor are they uninterested in the scene they behold. To them, we are taught, "is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God;" and the success of one penitent, gives them new joy, in their high state of glory. Besides these august beings, the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity, observes the warfare between good and evil in this sublunary world. From his lofty throne, he is intent upon our ways. He expouses the interests of the good, and is himself the judge of our fidelity. We are wont to be influenced by the presence of the great. The learned dispute more acutely, and the contending strive more manfully, when august personages are witnesses of the contest. If then the holy angels are spectators of our warfare, who would not so strive as to be crowned? If God be umpire, what shame, as well as loss, to be overcome!

Which leads me to the last consideration I shall mention, as calculated to animate us in our Christian course; which is, the infinite and eternal weight of glory, which is reserved for those who shall be victorious. In the ancient games, to what self-denial and severe conflict did not the parties submit, that they might win the prize placed at the goal; a laurel, or a parsley crown? And to what toils and hardships, do we not devote ourselves, to gain the goods and honors of this perishable world! But what are these, compared with that crown of glory which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for the faithful? The possession of this, is expressed in my text, by inheriting all things. And truly, all that can exalt, all that can satisfy, all that can delight, must be their portion, who shall have an eternal abode assigned them, in the mansions of the Almighty's glory. But to secure this inheritance to ourselves, we must be *faithful unto death*, we must overcome. God's promises are conditional. They are made to those, who will abide in Christ. Should others be admitted into his holy city,

they would only defile it, without being capable of enjoying its pleasures. His wisdom and goodness, therefore, have united with his justice, in decreeing, that into it, the fearful, and unbelieving, the abominable, and murderers, and unclean, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall never enter. In the Christian, as well as in the heathen race, no man is crowned, except he strive lawfully. And the crown reserved in heaven for the victorious, will be an infinite recompense for all that they may be called to do and suffer. It is true, they may have to resist many fascinating allurements, and to forego many enticing joys. But what are the vain pleasures of this fleeting world, when weighed in the balance with the pleasures of heaven, with the interests of eternity! It is true, they may be called in their conflict, to cut off their foot or their hand that offends them, and to cast it from them. But is it not unspeakably better, to "enter into life, halt, or maimed, than having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into hell-fire?" There is no sacrifice to duty we can be required to make, for which there is not provided an answerable reward. For all the painful preparations, the self-denials, and the arduous conflicts, which the Christian may endure in adhering to the banners of his Lord, he will receive an infinitely exceeding recompense in that state of bliss prepared for the faithful, in the regions of immortality and glory. Hearken to a declaration of the Son of God; and if any thing can animate you in the warfare of your present probation, you will find it in his impressive words—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sit down with my Father, on his throne."

It remains, that some rules be recommended, which may render the Christian warfare easy and successful.

In the first place, it will promote our comfort in the conflict, to ponder often the motives and considerations, by which we are to be animated. In this, as in every warfare, zeal is necessary both to ease and success; not that unenlightened tumultuous zeal, which depends upon the animal spirits, and is productive only of confusion; but that rational, steady zeal,

which springs from a consciousness of the importance of the cause, and engages the affections to co-operate with the mind. Such a zeal is necessary, if we would make any progress in the Christian course. Without it, we shall be sluggish and unsteady, often beguiled with the stratagem of the enemy, and led into a remissness which may endanger the victory. We should then frequently recollect our interest and our vows; the tendency of our duty to promote our temporal happiness; the great and glorious examples which are set before us; the promises of Almighty God to aid our exertions; the high and august beings, who are witnesses of our behavior; and the amazing good, even eternal life, which we have at stake. If these considerations are lost in the bustle of business, or amusements of the world, we shall perform our warfare with toil, and doubtful success. But if they be often and soberly recollected, they will inspire us with an ardent and steady zeal, which will as powerfully diminish the obstacles in our way, as the sun drinketh up the dew.

Another rule, for rendering our warfare easy and successful, is to be well, and properly armed. We must put on the Christian's strength and defence. This is the whole armor of God; the suit complete, in which his ancient saints fought and were conquerors; and which is provided in his armory for every soldier of Jesus Christ. It is so happily described by the pen of an inspired apostle, that I forbear to use any other words. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked: and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Clad in this armor, what can annoy us? Its defensive part is impenetrable; and that which is for active operation is irresistible. The shield of faith, is itself a panoply. To preserve it unloosened through our own heedlessness, and unimpaired by the evils and discouragements of life, is the highest point of christian skill. It will

many ways be endangered, by the misgivings of our own minds, by the obscurity of the ways of Providence, by invisible adversaries, and by the artifices or examples of evil men. But the ease and success of our warfare, do essentially depend upon the preservation of this shield of faith. Confident in the truth of God, let nothing wrest it from you. For "this is the victory, which overcometh the world, even our faith." And again, "who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?"

Further, when we are possessed of zeal springing from a sense of the magnitude of the cause, and have put on the whole armor of God, it will much promote the facility of our warfare to be disencumbered of as much as may be with foreign concerns. "No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." We cannot make much progress in the Christian life, with our eyes upon heaven, and our hearts upon this present world. When the attention is distracted, it accomplishes nothing. There are indeed many temporal things, upon which the condition of our nature obliges us to bestow our care; there are duties of society, and domestic affairs, which we cannot innocently neglect; and charity must allow, that some relaxations are necessary for the feebleness of nature. But whatever is beyond those, all factitious pleasures, all vain pursuits, are incumbrances in the Christian warfare. They retard our progress; they weaken our force; they embolden the foe. When men are careful and troubled about many things, they seldom prosecute effectually "the one thing needful." It is with a single eye to the service of God, that our duty will be most easily and successfully performed. Hence the apostle exhorts his Hebrew converts, to "lay aside every weight," not to encumber themselves with foreign concerns, but be intent on the race that was set before them.

Again, it will greatly facilitate our Christian course, to make ourselves acquainted with our weaknesses, and be vigilant of the motion of our foes. All men are subject to imperfections. Most men have their particular frailties. They

are more liable to some passions and vices, than to others. In these vulnerable parts, it will be found by observation they are generally assailed. Temptation comes where we are weakest; and the inroads which it thus makes upon virtue, have rendered the warfare of many a good man doubly arduous, by making work for difficult and bitter repentance. Wherever we are weak, centinels should be placed, to repel the first approaches of temptation, and give us the alarm. Had David done this, his glory might not have been tarnished with adultery. Had it been done by Judas, he might not have sold his Lord. The prophet and apostle alike fell, by an attack where they were weakest, and had not properly fortified themselves. It is a great part of the Christian's wisdom, to have his eye upon his foe; and wherever he discovers himself most liable to be assaulted, there to place his vigilant and powerful forces. We must not only lay aside every weight, but also the sin which doth so easily beset us; if we would strive successfully under the banners of the Redeemer.

And here, it may be added, that to yield in any instance to vice, will increase the difficulty of our spiritual life. It is much easier to maintain the ground you hold, than to recover it when it is lost. The man who yields to temptation, then rallies his powers, then tampers, and then yields again, determined to go only to a certain point, and then return, and rally his virtue anew, will make of the Christian warfare a laborious and hazardous work. He will at best make but a slow and dishonorable progress, and in an evil hour may be fatally undone. Would you have your Christian course easy and safe? Never listen, never yield to its enemies. Habit is ease, perseverance is safety. But when you have suffered yourselves to be diverted from your object, and the course of duty has been interrupted, to regain integrity and persevere, will be found more difficult than had been imagined.

Once more; to the success of the Christian, as of every other warfare, the assistance and blessing of the Most High, is indispensibly necessary. Without the Almighty, we can do nothing. His Holy Spirit is a most powerful agent in ren-

dering our "yoke easy, and our burthen light." It is through his secret influences, that we are made strong in the fight of faith, and may be invincible. Hence arises the necessity of prayer, which is a natural and appointed mean of obtaining this precious blessing. And surely, they who will neglect this honorable duty, do not deserve and cannot expect that assistance, which when faithfully performed it never fails to procure. Prayer is in itself peculiarly adapted to qualify us for every conflict. It purifies and exalts our affections. It strengthens our holy resolutions. We are emboldened, by that indescribable complacency, which is always diffused through the bosoms of those, who have faithfully communed with the Father of their spirits. But it is chiefly and incalculably valuable in the Christian warfare; in that it brings down the assistance and blessing of heaven, through which we cannot fail to overcome. Possessed of these, "though an host should encamp against us, our heart need not fear;" yea, though our flesh and nature failed, in these we might be confident. Let it then be esteemed an important rule for rendering our warfare easy and successful, to present ourselves often before the throne of the Eternal, that by communion with God, we may have our affections spiritualized, and obtain his aid and sovereign blessing.

It remains to be added, lastly, that we should avail ourselves of all the means, which have been specially appointed for our furtherance in the Christian life. Among these, I reckon a constant and devout attendance on the sanctuary; when the services which are offered, and the word which is preached, may beget or confirm in us a knowledge and love of divine things. Among these may be ranked communion with the head and members of the Church, in which we may take courage, from the character of our associates, and from the name and might of our glorious leader. Among these, may be placed a faithful attention to the precepts and instructions concerning our warfare, which are contained in the Holy Scriptures. But chief among these, is the holy eucharist, the supper of our Lord. To this, should every soldier of the

Redeemer resort. Here should he seek for spiritual strength. In this sacrament, he will find the pardon of his sins, the pledges of his master's love, and the sure promise of immortality. His soul will he strengthened and refreshed for its spiritual conflicts, by the body and blood of Christ, as his body is by the bread and wine. It was doubtless with a view to our necessities, that the blessed Redeemer in the same night in which he was betrayed, instituted this holy sacrament; and to it should every one of his disciples come, for that spiritual strength, which no man knoweth save him who receiveth it.

Indeed the only way in which we can with any degree of joyful expectation hope to overcome, is to avail ourselves of those channels of grace which God hath set open; and be found walking in his commandments and ordinances blameless.

Remembering the declaration of his mouth, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things," be induced to conquer your aversion to spiritual truths, to subdue the body of sin within you, to vanquish the temptations and allurements of the world, and to rise above the troubles and perplexities of life. So shall you be qualified to fasten your hopes upon the good things of the world to come; and in that solemn hour, when the strong men bow themselves, and the hearts of the stoutest are appalled, be able to adopt the peaceful requiem of the apostle, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

SERMON XIII.

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THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE GOSPEL.*

1 CORINTHIANS, II, 1, 2.

AND I, BRETHREN, WHEN I CAME TO YOU, CAME NOT WITH EXCELLENCY OF SPEECH, OR OF WISDOM, DECLARING UNTO YOU THE TESTIMONY OF GOD. FOR I DETERMINED NOT TO KNOW ANY THING AMONG YOU, SAVE JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED.

Such was the decision of St. Paul, when he had it in his power, in a city of high literary renown, to refute and remove the current prejudices against the unlettered preachers of christianity, by the exhibitions of his own commanding and overpowering eloquence. He, who, by nature and education, might have entered into a successful competition with the distinguished orators of Greece, and whose mind, while dwelling upon the absorbing topics of man's redemption and salvation, could have easily kindled the fire of enthusiasm, which warms into ardor and action the souls of a populace, discarded that excellency of speech and of man's wisdom, which would have elevated him, in such circumstances, to an honorable pre-eminence.

Though the people whom he addressed, had been familiar with displays of oratorical skill, such, as before that age, the world had seldom heard or felt, he yet had it in his power to enhance and perpetuate the enchantment it creates. He could have held them spell-bound, by an eloquence, with which, the plausible, insinuating, persuasive address of

* This discourse was delivered in St. Paul's Church, Boston, before the Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts, and is now first published in the "Pulpit," at the request of many who heard it.

Æschines, or the bold, rapid vehemence of Demosthenes alone, could have worthily been brought into comparison. Indeed had all the forensic talents of the Greek states been marshalled against him, he could have carried away the palm of victory in such an intellectual contest. Endowments of nature, which made him a chosen vessel of God, instruction at the feet of Gamaliel, and companionship and sympathy with the devoted followers of the crucified Saviour, had done for him more than the school of Gorgias, at Athens, or the teachings of Isœus, which so successfully cultivated and developed the maturing genius, and elaborated the education of Grecian orators, could accomplish for them.

Yet, Brethren, with all these advantages, of unrivalled reasoning powers, and of intellectual superiority, which were sufficient to spread the fame of his writings every where and distinguish them as monuments of unexampled eloquence and logical demonstration to the end of time; in the midst of a city, where Christ crucified, was literally, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks but foolishness, this holy minister of God discarded every thing but gospel truth *in its pristine, unadorned simplicity*, and relied upon the positive efficacy and inherent energy of *that* alone, for success in his ministry and in the conversion of souls. This too, was the resolute conduct of his labors among a people, whose extraordinary intellectual character and refinement have been the proud boast of the world.

What more plain and impressive lesson is to be deduced from this illustrious example and noble declaration, than that *the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, in the hands of a faithful, prudent and enlightened ministry, relying on the grace and Spirit of God, following its dictates, and diligently fulfilling their appropriate duties, is sufficient for the conversion and salvation of men?*

If the ministers of our most holy religion, when they assume the sacerdotal habit, and engage in their duties, as preachers of righteousness, determine not to know any thing, among those to whom they are sent, but Jesus Christ and him crucified,

can it be an unwarrantable faith, or a presumptuous reliance on the divine agency, if they *believe*, and *act* confidently *on the belief*, that in this way, they will most acceptably fulfil the ministry, they have received of the Lord Jesus? Can they more effectively in any other way, contribute to the success of the gospel and the conversion of men's souls? If, Brethren, gospel-truth, in the force and plainness of gospel-simplicity, by virtue of the authority of its divine origin, and the power of its application to the condition of all men, be not a sufficient guaranty to ensure its success in the world, then, the ministers of God's word may as well lay their sacred vestments aside, and resign in despair the office with which they have been honored. For the testimony of God declared or preached, otherwise than on its divine authority, or recommended to favor, by excellency of speech or man's wisdom alone, must prove unavailing. This is the word of the Lord, in relation to it, and it sufficiently sustains such a sentiment. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." And the reason of this is very plain, "That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

Is there not then an interesting enquiry to be made whether our calculations of the success of those ministrations, in which the messengers of divine truth are engaged, are not too often predicated upon excellency of speech and of man's wisdom, rather than on the divine influence, which, the Bible teaches, is essential to their efficacy? and whether a careful view of the economy of our holy religion will not teach us, that too much reliance, placed on literary and philosophical attainments, and the artificial modes of their popular exhibition, which are often in contradiction to its simplicity and spirit, has an undeviating tendency to neutralize its influence. Can its ministers, when they give themselves to the work of the Lord, and go into the world on their divine mission, to persuade men to repentance and amendment of life, mark out for themselves a better course of action than that, which this determination of St. Paul describes? If they resolve not to

know any thing among mankind, save Jesus Christ and him crucified, is it not manifest that the people must hear and know more of the essential doctrines of the Gospel, than from a different line of conduct, on the part of its ministers, they would receive?

Now, Brethren, the first position, which, in prosecuting this enquiry, we feel it our duty to take, is, that *the Bible is the word of God, and a miraculous revelation, which He has made to mankind.* If this position be questionable, then is "our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." To proceed on any other supposition, is unwarrantable, when the demonstration, by which this truth has been accompanied, is considered; and would be an abandonment of the reason and faith, established and sustained by the consent and convictions of ninety-nine-hundreths, of all the men of learning, and talents, of moral and intellectual superiority, which the christianized world has ever known. On the present occasion, especially, should this first position, be maintained with force and power, because it is the Bible, and that *alone*, which teaches, of Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

If then the Bible have this authoritative sanction, we *must* insist, that from its plain, simple precepts and declarations, and its inflexible requirements in order to salvation, there is for men neither evasion nor appeal.

It is this sacred volume, too, which teaches of human apostacy, and of the only way of recovery from its awful consequences. "For there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus Christ. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour," (for this very reason,) "for to give repentance and forgiveness of sins."

The lost and ruined condition of the world then, without a Saviour, and of every soul of apostate man that is in it, should be the first topic of our preaching, and the last upon which we should dwell. This doctrine is undeniably implied in the crucifixion of a being, of the dignity and holiness of Jesus Christ. It must be manifest when men reflect on the purport

of sacrifices under the Mosaic dispensation, and on the known existence of sacrifices, in order to propitiate the Deity in every nation on the habitable globe, from the remotest periods of their history, that some serious impediment to an amicable intercourse with the Creator of men, was felt or understood. If to the shedding of the blood of an innocent animal, invariably there were imputed pardon and reconciliation, it must be decisive proof, that repentance, by the universal consent of mankind, was, of itself, insufficient to produce such a result; and that "without shedding of blood there was no remission."

This truth, a divine revelation must originally have taught mankind; for from no other source could a sentiment, which violates the dictates of nature, have been derived. And if a subsequent revelation joins its voice, to all that pre-existing facts suggest, in a case, so deeply interesting to the human mind, then, when the sacrifice rises in dignity, grandeur and importance to an *infinite worth*, and we admit that the offering of himself, for the sins of the world, on the part of One, "who thought it not robbery to be equal with God," could not have been permitted, unless in the divine mind, it had been deemed necessary, the existence of an universal and deplorable apostacy and ruin, is the only legitimate inference deducible from such extraordinary premises.

It is on this undeniable conclusion, supported by almost every page of the Bible, that the preaching of St. Paul was based. "The sentence of death reigned fromAdam to Moses," he asserts, "even over THEM, that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, which died for them and rose again."—"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

It is, brethren, the vast importance of this doctrine, of Christ crucified, to every intelligent and rational being on the face of the earth, which renders so interesting, *this* theme of apostolical preaching, and for this reason, should the minis-

ters of Christ's religion determine not to know any thing among those, to whom they are sent, than Jesus Christ, and him crucified: or, in other words, should determine to keep this object ever in view, and to impress on their own, and other men's souls, a sense of their apostate condition by nature, and their hopes through grace.

If there had been no divine law, there could have been no transgression. If there had been no original transgression, by which the whole posterity of man became alienated, and at war with God, there would have been no need of sacrifices, as a means of propitiation and reconciliation. If man had remained pure and holy as he came from the hands of his creator, the divine favor and presence would not have been withdrawn from him; he would not have been banished from the scene of primeval happiness, nor denied the privileges of intercourse with God, except through a mediatorial sacrifice.

But it was fit, that a proof should be given of his obedience, in order that the sovereignty of God should be acknowledged and reverenced: that the rightful proprietorship and supremacy of the Creator over the creature, which his own hands had formed, might be recognised; and that the inequality between an infinite and finite intelligence should be felt. Every dictate of reason makes us feel the fitness of that vindication of the divine sovereignty, which the giving of a law implies; and had not obedience been *possible*, surely, my brethren, that justice, which every dispensation to the world so fully and so impressively convinces us is inherent in the divine character, could not have permitted the consequences of sin, to the latest of man's posterity, to have been entailed on mankind.

The atonement of Christ, then, which, the promise respecting the seed of the woman implied, is, above all the most important, consolatory and interesting topic involved in our declaration of "the testimony of God."

If it pleased the Father, that in his Son, who is "the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature," by whom "were all things created that are in heaven and in earth,") "should all fulness dwell;" who,

having made our peace by the blood of his cross, "by him, to reconcile all things unto himself," "whether they be things in earth or things in heaven;" then, Brethren, Jesus Christ and him crucified, *must* be set forth; in all our preaching, as the sinner's only hope.

And such a theme needs not "excellency of speech" nor the enticing words of man's wisdom, to render it impressive. This is Gospel truth in its simplicity; that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; Christ the first fruits; afterwards *they that are Christ's*, remember this qualification, they that are Christ's, at his coming;" that is, they that have been born again, who are his by a believing faith and a repentant, obedient life: That "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them:" That "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts;" that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" that unless "a man be born of water and of the spirit," of God, "he cannot enter the kingdom of God:" That "to be spiritually minded is life and peace;" and that "except ye eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life, no spiritual life, in you. These, Brethren, and like declarations of holy writ, need not labored discussion for proof, when they are founded wholly and firmly upon a divine declaration. Proof can do little good, when the heart rejects what God reveals.

So too in relation to the way of acceptance with God. "I" says the Saviour, "am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh to the father but by me, neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." To assertions like these, Brethren, is it needful to apply any thing like demonstration, when the very arguments, which must be employed in their support, are less impressive, self evident, and convincing than the simple authority upon which they stand? When the mind

will not receive and regard what God has declared as a necessary requirement and an appointed method of salvation, little will reasoning, or excellency of speech, or man's wisdom avail.

As all men are conceived and born in sin, since a sinful moral nature, like hereditary constitutional propensities to disease, may be transmitted down through successive generations of mankind; as the word of God has declared that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually; that children are transgressors from the womb, and that without holiness no man can see the Lord; it must be true, that no one can cherish any scriptural hope of salvation, unless the spirit of God, work in the children of disobedience, and the mercy of God impart to men, a new heart and a new spirit; and take away the stony heart out of their flesh, so that they may walk in his statutes and keep his ordinances and do them, that they may be his people and he be their reconciled God.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh," that corrupt nature which is our inheritance, still produces the works that are congenial to a sinful nature. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit; the operation of God's spirit on the heart, fills it with aspirations for spiritual and heavenly things, and imparts to the soul a perception of their beauty and value. Should we then marvel that we *must* be born again; that a work of grace and mercy, through the goodness of God, who gives his Holy Spirit to them who perseveringly and scripturally ask him, must be wrought by its divine agency, before the soul takes its everlasting flight to another world, before we can enter the kingdom of heaven!

And, Brethren, in what connection, does this doctrine stand with Jesus Christ and him crucified? The Holy Ghost the comforter, did not descend upon the earth until the great atoning sacrifice for sin had been made; until the Saviour of the world had "led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men," and it was Christ that sent him. It was this that he promised to send to his faithful disciples, that it might "*bring all things*

to their remembrance whatsoever he had told them," and thus give its legitimate influence to divine truth on the heart. It was this which was truly and emphatically the spirit of God and of Christ, for Christ said "all that the Father hath are mine," influencing the heart and conduct in the works of repentance, faith and obedience, and which is implied in the declarations, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his,—if any man is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature.

It was this Holy Spirit which, on the day of Pentecost so miraculously wrought for the salvation of souls, and is now the agent of conversion, renewing the sinner in the spirit of his mind, so that he can discover what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, and sealing him unto the day of redemption. And it is this spiritual power, when good thoughts come into the mind, and holy resolutions are active in the heart, which men are so impressively warned not to resist nor grieve.

The work of repentance, is essentially connected with Jesus Christ and him crucified. "Whom the Jews slew and hanged on a tree, *him* hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a Saviour, for this very reason, *to give repentance* to Israel and forgiveness of sins." Now repentance is a change of heart, producing a corresponding change of conduct, and this work is produced in men by Jesus Christ, through the agency of his blessed spirit, which convinces us of sin, and bringeth forth in the soul by its purifying and sanctifying influence, the fruits of obedience and holiness.

These then, Brethren, are some of the essential doctrines of the Gospel, and they are so closely interwoven into the Christian system, that it is impossible to tear them away without rending and marring that veil which the Deity is pleased to interpose between himself and the apostate family of man. They define the terms of his intercourse with his Maker, and are the appointed laws, by which his mercy and favour are to be obtained.

They are impressively exhibited in Jesus Christ and him

crucified, and a determination, on the part of God's ministers to know him, and him alone; to keep him, and him only, constantly in view, while declaring the testimony of God, and fulfilling the commission upon which they are sent, is their imperative duty and the most probable means of its successful execution. Less than this, they can scarcely do, while taking heed to the ministry they have received in the Lord, and acting as the faithful servants of him by whom they have been delegated. And when these doctrines have been faithfully delivered and urged upon the attention of men, *from the high authority, whence they proceed;* when they have been exhibited as "*the testimony of God*" to a guilty world; it has been by *his* spirit alone, that they have been rendered efficacious, in the conversion and salvation of souls. For Paul may plant and Apollos water, but it is God that giveth the increase.

It has been gospel truth, preached in its simplicity, plainness and unreserved application to the wants and weakness of our nature; set forth, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, by ministers, who have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that they might know the things that are freely given us of God; that has been mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

And when, Brethren, you look to the *motive* of this course, on the part of those who minister to you in holy things; which is that they may take heed to themselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood, must it not approve itself to every man's conscience and find a sufficient sanction in every reflecting mind.

Take for a moment a prospective view of a scene, which perhaps at no distant time may be seen, when a minister of Jesus Christ, and that flock, over whom, divinely commis-

sioned, he has been honorably placed, shall be assembled at the bar of God. They are about to hold their first intercourse together in the other world, while each, in trembling anxiety, or fell despair, awaits the irreversible sentence of their Judge. Ere the awful award of "depart ye accursed into everlasting fire" is thundered from the Almighty's throne, in a voice which must shake the universe to its foundations, and appal the stoutest of careless unbelieving souls, suppose a pause to ensue, in which, the hopes of the converted, the doubts of the faithless, and the anguish of the sinner at this awful hour find utterance. Upon whom will the self-condemned impenitent, first cast his piercing look, and pour forth the heart rending accents of his agony and despair? Must it not be on him, if there be such a one, to whose unfaithful ministry, he may attribute, all the anguish of an unrenewed and guilty soul, and all the torments of hell? May he not exclaim in the most pathetic tones, "Me he never told of my natural apostacy and ruin:—To me he never faithfully exhibited the only way of salvation, and pointed out with interest and feeling, the great atoning sacrifice, that was made for the sins of the world:—Me he never warned to flee from the wrath to come and seek conversion in Christ Jesus:—Me he never persuaded that I must be born again and be reconciled to God, and through Christ, find joy and peace in believing, and forgiveness with my judge:—Me he never impressively or feelingly exhorted to repentance, as if it was essential to my salvation, and thus recorded in the word of God:—To me he never spoke of the Holy Spirit, by whose work on my soul, I might have been sealed unto the day of redemption, against the horrors of this awful hour:—Me he never entreated to come to Christ, and by admission into his church, by baptism and a devout reception of the Lord's supper, have been placed in circumstances auspicious for my salvation:—Me he never exhorted to give myself up, in a perpetual covenant to God, that I might through faith, repentance and obedience, have sought in the atonement and blood of Christ, and in the work of the spirit, for sanctification and redemption.

And, Brethren, do ministers of Christ shudder when they think of their responsibility, and tremble at the idea of the possibility of such a recrimination at that awful hour of judgement? Oh! then, blame not their faithfulness; reproach not the plainness and simplicity of their speech; object not to *their* boldness, who set before you *the testimony of God*, and determine, in all their intercourse among you, to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

And to you, Brethren of the ministry, may I not say, that we *must* now do our duty, in the *fear of God*. The time is short for us to perform the work which is in our hands, and to fulfil the ministry that we have received of the Lord Jesus. Let us then be faithful, let us set forth gospel truth, in its simplicity, pointedness and uncompromising strictness towards the wilfully disobedient, and its alluring tenderness and compassion towards the anxious enquirer after the way of life. Let us be diligent, persevering and prayerful; prudent; *prudent* in our intercourses with men, but *fearless* in the delivery of our message, let us give no cause for them to say that we magnify our office, that we may exalt ourselves; or that we are otherwise their servants, than for their own and Christ's sake. Let us endeavour to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and after the fulfilment of a faithful ministry, let us rely only, and wait patiently, on God, for his blessing.

If ever we are to be useful to the Church and to the souls of men it must be, ere age steals from our bodies all their elastic vigor, and with its concomitant infirmities clouds and enervates the mind. Oh, then, let us gird up our loins to engage with renovated ardour, in the duties of that highand holy enlistment, to which, our ministerial vows have sealed us, for the term of our lives. Let us seek for grace to continue steadfast, unwavering and persevering, unto the end. Let us be faithful unto death; and then our ministry, through weakness, imperfect, and through sinfulness, unworthy, may not go unrewarded, and the "heed" we have given to it rather than its success, be the evidence of our recognition, and acquittal, at the hands of God.

SERMON XIV.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM WITHINGTON. A. M.
Late Missionary in the Diocese of New York.

THE REWARD SOUGHT, OBTAINED.

MATTHEW VI. 16.

VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, THEY HAVE THEIR REWARD.

SUCH is the thrice repeated declaration of our Lord respecting the religious services of the hypocrites, that is, the Pharisees. He applies it to their alms, to their prayers, and to their fastings. Their alms are given at the sound of a trumpet, for the collecting of beggars in the streets. For their prayers—not their social devotions, but such as they offer each for himself—the most conspicuous station is taken. When they fast, the face is disfigured with ashes, and the affectations of every trait of wo.

In all this, one end is the real object of concern—to wit, to pass in the world as uncommonly devoted to the service of God. Unworthy and abominable as are the means employed, they shall not be altogether in vain. They shall obtain—just the object sought, just the reward in heart desired. They seek the reputation of eminent sanctity; and they have it. They pass among men for the undoubted favorites of heaven, and share abundantly the consequent worldly advantages. But the approbation of God—it enters into their reward, just as much as regard for him does into their motives of action; that is, nothing at all. As this is not the reward they seek, so neither is it obtained.

At first sight we might regard the hypocrisy here exposed, as too gross, too obviously aiming to be seen of men, to obtain its end. It might seem, as if a little more shunning of obser-

vation ought to have been affected, more surely to gain the reputation of piety. But this would be to overlook the feelings and manners of the times. Such downright ostentation in religion was not then in any degree disreputable, as it would be among us. They who sought reputation for sanctity, did it with too steady an aim—too acute singleness of view, to fail by overdoing.

Let us beware, lest we value ourselves too highly, because the tendency of the times does not tempt us to a violation of Christian modesty so outrageous: because we know, that for literally sounding a trumpet in the streets for collecting beggars to receive our charities, for praying in the public gaze, for affected mortification in fasting, we should only be scorned and hissed at; such being no longer suitable means to obtain glory of men. We may ridicule, or pity, all this, and yet be nothing the nearer to the simplicity of Christian principle. Doubtless mankind have not so changed their nature, but that much of all this still exists, only less obvious to us, because so adapted to our habits of thinking and acting. Could we see all the regard to what man thinks, which alloys the most unpretending charity—all that mingles with professions of unworthiness really felt—we might think the times less changed in reality, than in appearance. And if the time shall ever come, when the kingdom of God shall singly rule the hearts of his people, pre-eminently above its present influence, as much as we look for the increase of its subjects: when the men of that day look back on the operations of this, without the gift of looking further than to the outward appearance; I know not, with what sentiments they will contemplate the bustling array, and much that enters into the benevolent operations, which we regard as the peculiar glory of our age. I know not, whether they will find most to pity, or to approve. Perhaps in that day the question may be asked, When the attempt to send the gospel to every creature was revived, why did the dispensers of the public charities publish to the world the names and benefactions of all who contributed a dollar or two to the undertaking? Could it be taken as any

thing else than a satire on their vanity? And charity may answer, the imperious necessity of freely giving what had been so freely received, without suffering the right hand to inquire into the doings of the left, was then so little understood, that the purest benevolence could not be sustained in its undertakings, without seeming to call in the aid of some very inferior principles of action.

Again, when we read, that the ancient hypocrites did all to be seen of men, to have glory of them, we are not to suppose, that they deliberately proposed to themselves this end, with that open, absolute singleness of purpose, with which you avowedly pursue a lawful temporal object, by the means which providence dictates. We are not to suppose, they thought to themselves, we will make the profession of great zeal for God, and mortification to the world, the means of attracting admiration, and securing our worldly interest. No, we may be assured, they never represented to their own consciences their prime object to be other, than to serve the Lord devotedly. But who that admits other considerations once to sway in his religious professions, shall afterwards disentangle his motives, even to his own inspection? Let us beware, lest we value ourselves too highly, because we have never honestly professed to ourselves, that we would make the law of God the mask to cover our own devices.

Now if you will really make religion a machine to acquire glory among men, you will of course have discernment enough to perceive, wherein you must vary your conduct from that of your predecessors of old. And as men have learned to differ widely in their estimation of all that relates to religion, that which is highly esteemed among one class, being an abomination with another; it may be well to lay your account with seeking the esteem of only a part.

Suppose then, you desire to be noted as being strictly pious, strenuous for the religion of your fathers, opposed to innovations in religious belief, boldly penetrating the hollowness of professedly improved modes of thinking and liberalized ideas. Of course you must yield the good esteem of one part of the community, the better to secure that of the other.

But this very necessity renders success on the field still open more certain: and this may be yet wide enough for your satisfaction. It is at all times little, that the faithful can know of their fellows. They must judge and act according to the profession, and the merest surface of the conduct. But when the principles once held in common are abandoned by numbers, there is naturally a disposition to think favorably of such as still hold fast. Party spirit may contribute of its influence, to create a favorable opinion toward those, who hold the accepted doctrines and practices.

If then such is the reward, that you mainly seek, you may pretty safely calculate on having it. I would not indeed engage, that you shall never so far betray the real motives of your conduct, as to create painful apprehensions in the more discerning of your associates. But the very qualities, which render them discerning to penetrate your covering, will render them averse from communicating their apprehensions. They will not think it incumbent on them narrowly to scrutinize your heart. They will not forget the charity that hopeth all things. They will not be uninfluenced by the motives, not to inspect too rigidly the ranks beset with so many temptations to desertion. The generality will cordially believe the good of you, which the discerning few cannot but hope. You will probably pass through life, as a fair candidate for eternity; be consoled in the hour of death, as just on the verge of your greatest happiness; and be commended afterwards, as among the happiest of the happy.

If in the mean time you are expected to make some contributions to religious charities, from which in another line of life you would be exempt; they need not exceed, perhaps not nearly equal, the sums, which you would be compelled to spend and which you would cheerfully spend, to support in any of its forms, the character of a mere man of the world.

You shall have your reward, and that not altogether worthless. It might pass for great, if this world were to bound our view. It will contribute much to your comfort here. It will comprise a friendly interest in your welfare, the more cordial and intense, because strait the way, and because it

is intended to reach beyond the bounds of time. If your station is lowly, you shall be rewarded by the comparative little importance attached by those, with whom are your religious sympathies, to these present distinctions of society. Or if you have domestics and dependants, you may expect a part of your reward in their good order, derived from the influence of your manner of exhibiting religion to them. For among all the improvements of these days, it has hardly yet been pretended, that any thing better than old-fashioned christianity has been devised to regulate this portion of the community.

If trials and troubles attend this your reward, the portion you are compelled to bear, will probably not exceed what would be incident to your lot, in any other course you might choose. Only be content with the reward you really seek, and which alone your conduct is competent to obtain, and expect no part of it, when you reach that world, which has not been first in your calculations.

Or, will you seek the praise of rising superior to the prejudices and bigotry of past ages—of laying hold on eternal truth, wherever found, or wherever rejected—of thinking liberally and charitably on the diversities of belief, which divide and embroil mankind? This too may be obtained at a very cheap rate. You need not investigate in the originals the scriptures, which you profess so highly to prize, and so independently to examine; studying the history of the times when they were written, the better to know, what sense they were then supposed to convey. You need not plod through the Greek and Latin fathers; to learn, how one opinion has grown out of another, and reject their authority, after learning from themselves, what they held, and how they held to it. You need not even be solicitous to acquire that critical and historical information, with which your vernacular tongue might furnish you. You need not exclude from your heart hard thoughts, and bitter suspicions, and supercilious contempt, of those who differ from you. Nay, you need not restrain your tongue from expressing all these, from charging upon them the worst possible motives. You have little else

to do, than to adopt a system, and a phraseology, which you can acquire at little cost of time or trouble, and to be very profuse in the application of the general undefined name of *christian*; and your end is obtained—you have your reward. You shall be hailed by those, from whom you seek such greeting, as being just what you profess to be. You shall have your reward, in being counted worthy to be numbered with some of the most enlightened and refined of society.

As to the satisfaction of real independence of thinking—of tracing out the various causes, which have formed the opinions of men at different times—of receiving or rejecting them, according to fixed rules of evidence, unbiassed by the love of the ancient or of the new—this is probably what you have no conception of, and will never miss.

Neither expect to enjoy the serenity of temper, which genuine charity affords. If you would indeed contend with the opponent of your opinions, with such friendly feelings, as if each were equally desirous of truth, as ready to be corrected by him, as to set him right; if you would not yield to feelings of triumph at your advantages over him, or of anger at his over you; if you would not indulge contempt towards the supposed errors of others; if you would know the satisfaction, not of thinking very favorably of the general condition of mankind in the gross, but of putting the best possible construction on the particular acts of individuals, which thwart your interest, or contradict your opinions; this is a prize not so cheaply won; perhaps one, for which you have no taste or inclination; perhaps you have more relish for censure and satire, than to appreciate it.

Or, will you make religion a foil, to set off the superior generosity and nobleness of your own nature, which can do without it in any of its forms? Will you seek the glory of being humane, noble-spirited, endowed with whatever good qualities religion can give, without the religious fears necessary to influence vulgar minds? Here too the reward, you aim at, is easily attained. You need not be careful to be a very rigid moralist. Practice a few showy popular virtues; and a belief of the good heart, from which they spring, will

cover a great many deficiencies in the rest of your conduct. Even the want of a uniformly consistent virtuous life, may give more prominence, and attract more admiration, to what virtues you do practice. You may find some governed in the main by religious motives, defective in some particulars; they may have for instance a tinge of covetousness: and you may contrive to bring your conduct into contrast with theirs in this particular, so as to set off your own to great advantage. You can find enough ready to give you the palm for your real or supposed superiority here. And in fact the generosity, which religion does not govern, needs cost a man's purse but very little. One dollar skilfully spent towards furnishing an entertainment for a company skilfully selected, shall go further towards establishing the character, than ten spent in the unostentatious relief of obscure poverty. So cheaply may this reward be obtained. Will you pursue it, as worthy of your serious intent?

Why stop to consider the probable success of him, who, without making *religion* a cloak for avarice (to doing which we are little tempted at this day) aims at wealth as the reward for making it the one object, in whose pursuit he is "all head to counsel, and all heart to act;" taking care, not to be quite a knave, nor yet quite coming up to the strictness of christian principle; and how generally he shall not fail of his end? Or him, who courts popular favor, ready to accommodate his principles to the changes of the times, submitting to involve his conduct in the intricate doublings, which political intrigue requires? As he seeks not, so neither needs he regret, the conscious loftiness of unbending integrity of a Cato. But with a tolerable share of sagacity, he may expect a due portion of the favor craved.

I hasten rather to mark one other course, where the reward is no less certain, nay established far surer, than either yet considered. Something singular—unforeseen—may wrest either of these from your grasp. Of such as these it is said with an emphasis, that the possessors *have* their reward; that is, have it already, have the whole of it, have it in this life, have the sum of what they ever shall enjoy. Now if instead

of these, you seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, whatever you fail of here, you *shall* have your reward.

When it is said, "Take heed lest ye do your alms before men, *to be seen of them;* otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven;" it is implied, as a thing well understood, that alms properly given—given from respect to God, and benevolence to his creatures, without regard to human applause, shall have their reward hereafter. What is here implied, is in many places of scripture plainly asserted. The abuse heretofore made of this doctrine in extolling the merit of charitable works, has inclined some in these latter times, to keep it almost or quite out of sight, lest they should detract from the free gift of salvation. We need not however guard the freeness of God's gifts more cautiously, than he has done himself. It is enough, if having done our utmost, we expect nothing but as the faithful fulfiling of a gratuitous promise, claiming to have rendered no profit, to have done only what was our duty to do, had no special reward been annexed.

The prayers of the hypocrites were another thing, for which they had their reward—had it precisely in the applause and favor, which they sought. So if hurt that the name of your Father is so often slighted and blasphemed among men, you pray, that *that* name in you may be hallowed, by the acknowledgement of his greatness and goodness, and your dependence; that the reign of truth and peace may pervade the dark places of the earth, and more supremely rule, where now established; that you may learn that hardest of lessons, to acquiesce in his will—his purposes for things throughout heaven and earth—though traversing your own, and laying your glory in the dust; as depending on him for the daily supply of common wants, though your stores may flow with the abundance, which the worldling attributes to his own skill and industry; asking the forgivness of your trespasses, and cherishing a forgiving spirit towards those affronts against yourself, which it is the pride of wordly honor to revenge; and pleading for protection and deliverance from the temptations, against which you feel your own virtue to be so incompetent, and your yielding to which to be so inexcusable; thus pray-

ing, you shall have your reward: have an earnest of it here, in the felt assurance, that he, to whose will you have bowed your own, is "oft most merciful, when most he seems to frown." You shall have its completion, when he who seeth in secret shall acknowledge and reward his people openly.

The hypocrites were rewarded according to their aim for their fasting. So if you find this to be a useful auxiliary of your prayers, and to the due subjection of your animal nature, and practice it with a single eye to this one object; you shall have your reward, precisely in what you sincerely desire.

But how do we cheat ourselves through want of simplicity of purpose in religion! Mark, for instance the wily politician, not content with hazarding his soul to the perils of political strife, without making his religious party and his political party the same; pleading zeal for God, and the defence of the civil rights of men, together for the accomplishment of the same purposes. "O what a tangled web he weaves!" which who shall unravel? And how does he leave his name, a wonder for succeeding ages to conjecture, in what proportion ambition and fanaticism, hypocricy and sincerity, entered into the most singular compound!

How hardly do we all give up worldly objects, even when we seem most intent on pursuing the one thing needful! and is not here the secret, why there is so much striving, without at last entering in? How easily do we make some earthly pursuit so blend with that of things heavenly, that we weave each his "tangled web," where it is almost impossible to unravel, and decide, what we have really been seeking and toiling after; or how far our conduct will stand the final test!

Now, to illustrate, we are not required to be indifferent to our own interest or reputation. But, if we would not involve the evidences of our spiritual state in inextricable confusion, and miss the consolations of religion, it does become us, honestly to avow to ourselves, what we do for interest's or reputation's sake, and not cloak it under zeal for God.

Suppose now, that we resolve, so far as we increase in riches to be rich towards God—to honor him with our substance, and with the first fruits of all our increase. Now if

we so work ourselves into a notion of the preeminent value of money in the hands of those disposed so to use it, that in our dealings we sometimes bear hard upon others, in a manner, which we could not justify on any other plea, than the purpose to get and use all for the glory of God; it is pretty certain, that this purpose is alloyed with another motive so base, that we must be content with no other reward for our service, than a little addition to our worldly wealth.

Or, if we are forward to contribute to charitable objects, willing to have our names published to the world, as an example and stimulate to others: if we do not act throughout on this motive, with a simplicity, which we are in perilous hazard of loosing; if, while we heartily desire our example to be followed by others, we are well content to receive a small meed of praise for being foremost in a good cause, and sometimes to shape our conduct with particular reference to this end: it is well, if we do not fail of all other reward, than the paltry tribute of human approbation,

Or if we seek spiritual gifts, as means for our own reputation; for even this may be: yes, it is possible to pray for the influences of the divine spirit, hoping thereby to be known for deep and thorough views of religion, superiority to the world, and having the habitual conversation in heaven: if we so pray for spiritual blessings, what wonder, if we ask and receive not? As some asked temporal goods to consume on their lusts, and received not, thus asking amiss; so the same disposition may be but a little more refined, when it asks spiritual gifts, to be consumed on its vain glory.

Something of this must be not so very uncommon. Why else does he, who is more ready to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask, than ye parents are to give good gifts to your children, why else does he so sparingly impart of the divine unction to our supplications? Why, but that we do not seek with that single desire to become holier and to diffuse a better influence to which the promised blessing is attached. Alas! how slowly do we attain to this simplcity of purpose, in seeking conformity to the divine image! and how hardly do we escape the condemnation of the ancient hypocrites, "*All their*

works they do to be seen of men!" Could we see in the broad day-light of heavenly truth all the regard still had to man's opinion, how would it stain the pride of all we do for God and his cause! I know not, who is more free from this hateful quality, to abhor and oppose it as his torment, instead of quietly yielding to be governed by its influence. And, if this be a trait of our infirmity, which the purifying process of returning to earth, and that alone can do away; holy, life-giving spirit, grant us so daily to groan under this burden, and so to aspire for deliverence from this vanity, that we may welcome, in its appropriated time, the event, which shall restore to us our God to be our all in all!

SERMON XV.

BY THE REV. PIERCE CONNELLY, M. A.
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ON DOING THE WILL OF GOD.

MATTHEW vii, 21, 22, 23.

NOT EVERY ONE THAT SAITH UNTO ME LORD, LORD, SHALL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; BUT HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. MANY WILL, &c.

The *day* spoken of is the dreadful day of judgment. The *kingdom*, is the everlasting paradise, the seat of immortality and blessedness beyond the grave. He who speaks in this authoritative tone is that eternal God, the Son himself, who, we believe, will at that awful season come in glorious majesty with all his holy angels, to determine and pronounce the irrevocable destiny of you and me. The threatened sentence of *depart*, carries with it a doom to woe unutterable and inconceivable, to despair and agony and a horrid necessity of hated life forever. Yet are these words, coming from such a source, bearing such awful import, heard with more listlessness and sooner allowed to perish from the memory than many a light song, or some well-told fiction.

The world, they who make up the world around us, look for a future state of bliss or its reverse, and are conscious, in their secret souls are conscious, that at each moment, the next may fix without recall their portion in the one or in the other; and yet the many in this world around us live on, live on, as if their destiny were terminated at their death, and with the faith of Christains, exhibit in their practice a less than pagan reverance for God, and a less high toned and beautiful morality than was enjoined in the schools and exemplified in the lives of ancient heathens. Possessing reason, they yet act like fools: holding the faith, they yet live like infidels.

By the great bulk of men, the evidences of Revelation are acknowledged unanswerable; the understanding of the most intelligent and the most acute, is unable to resist the testimony of miracles and prophecies, in favor of the gospel; yet far, infinitely far more than half of this great mass, are, as to their hearts, unimpressed by the testimony and practically despise the injunctions and disregard the rules of conduct which that gospel most peremptorily inculcates. They avow, and honestly, their acquiescence in the truth; they rank themselves and sincerely, among the number of Christ's followers, and say with them, Lord, Lord, but they neither seek, nor know, nor do the will of our Father which is in heaven.

I. Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

The words of our Saviour, in the connection in which they are spoken, carry with them a more extensive meaning and far greater force, than, at first sight, one would be likely to imagine. The source and the reason of moral and religious obligation are there disclosed and in an authoritative manner. It is broadly asserted that the will of God is man's duty and as it seems, solely because it is his will; his arbitrary will, if it please you so to call it, for in a certain sense it is true, that the will of a being, whose judgment is as uninfluenced as his authority unlimited, and himself infinite in all his attributes, must be, to mortals, both arbitrary and imperative: but it is also true, that nothing can spring from such a

source, which has not been decreed by the most perfect wisdom and been originated in unbounded goodness, which will not promote the glory of the Almighty himself, and therefore be well suited to the ultimate good of man. For God must be a perfect being; and his creatures happiness must ever be their great Creator's glory.

Since then, the will of God, is thus exclusively, thus peremptorily the source of obligation and the rule of action, since every duty is a duty, only because it is his will, it follows that every precept of revelation, once clearly ascertained, is of equal authority; that no matter how great may be the relative difference of heinousness or of guilt agreeably to human institutions and from peculiar circumstances, and particular consequences, the neglect or disobedience of any external ordinance or positive law, is just as much a sin, and for the very same reason a sin, as is the infraction of any natural duty: or, in other words, that to withhold from the one God, the homage which is his due, to reverence carved or molten images, to take the Almighty's name in vain, to forget the Sabbath's hallowing, to abstain voluntarily from the sacraments or from the assembling of ourselves together for public worship, are, in the sight of God, as positively sins, as to dishonor our earthly parents, to kill, to commit adultery, to steal, to slander, or to covet.

Again, if duties are duties only because they are the will of God, it follows that the same inferences are true in matters of belief, as well as of practice. The mysteriousness of a faith, founded on a revelation, or the necessary arbitrariness of its positive precepts, n more than the severe pureness of its morality, at all lessons the force of the facts upon which rests its divine authority, or, of course, of the obligation of obedience and submission. The mysteries of our holy religion, however much above our reason and the evangel cal form of sound doctrine, however contrary to carnal prejudices and carnal pride, are to be received as unhesitatingly, and as implicitly acquiesced in, as its positive ordinances and its pure and rigid rules of moral conduct. The same God who has commanded the one, has prescribed also the other—and if the one half of our

religion be as binding as the other, a sincere performance of all the moral and spiritual duties of christianity (if it were possible) in connection with a total neglect of its sacraments and ordinances and heretical faith, would be just as imperfect a righteousness as that of the scribes and pharisees, which was precisely the reverse; and we know, theirs was only enough to be the argument of an anathema, only enough to purchase for them the curse of exclusion from the number of the blest, and that too, from the lips of the mild and benevolent Jesus himself. It is only the united observance of all his duties, which has ever constituted, which can constitute, man's proper obedience to the will of God.

True, the will of God can only so far be a rule to bind men, as it is plainly discovered to them, and as they are able, honestly able, to comprehend it. And therefore though the will of God is in itself immutable, the standard of duty must be various, for that will is not always revealed to the same extent, or with equal clearness; and moreover, men have different capacities and opportunities of knowledge, and different degrees of grace. What, therefore, would be an acceptable doing of his will, in the sight of God, from the pagan or the savage, would, by no means be so, from one who has a special revelation. Every man, however, must be judged by the laws which have been given him. There is no choosing, whether he will, or whether he will not accept them. There is no resisting their authority, there is no escaping their obligation. The law of nature was the will of God to the Gentiles, the law of Moses to the Jews, and the law of Christ is it to us, and the whole of it is his will. *To offend in one point is to be guilty of all.* On the one hand, "without faith it is impossible to please God," and on the other, "faith, without works, is dead." Profession of belief must be followed by submission and obedience. Confession of sins must be accompanied by amendment of life. He that believeth must be baptized; and he that in regeneration is made partaker of the death of Christ, must continually commemorate the benefits which he receives thereby and devoutly seek, in the sacrament of our redemption, the communication of the body and the blood of that great sacrifice: but at the

same time, he that is adopted to be the child of God, must live as becometh the children of God—and he that drinketh the cup of the Lord and partaketh of the table of the Lord, must not drink the cup of devils, nor partake of the table of devils. Repentance, however bitter, will advantage nothing without fruits meet for repentance; faith, though it could remove mountains, will not profit without charity; devotion, however sincere; a reliance on the merits of Christ, however firm and unreserved, will not save a man without keeping the commandments. No imaginary decree of the Almighty, no personal assurance of his own, will avail a man at the impartial bar of God in the great day of judgment—but to have done the will of our Father which is in heaven.

II. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophecied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.

Extensive as is the number reached by this description, hypocrites, it would seem are not included in it; for there is an air of honesty about the expostulation, made, as it is supposed to be, to Him, whom they who offer it, must then at least recognize as the Searcher of all hearts. The words must then be confined in their application to such as not only make a profession of religion, but are sincere in their faith, and practice their *certain* virtues from principle: who even prophecy, cast out devils, and do many wonderful works in the name of Christ, but yet deceive themselves, because they do not in the broad sense, the will of the Father. The class alluded to, then, are those who select for their observation such parts of the will of God, as the disposition of their minds most naturally inclines them to, or the accidental circumstances of their condition most easily permit, or such as most gratify their vanity or best promote their interest, who thus, fondly lull their consciences, and flatter themselves, that, while their affections are at least, equally divided between their duty and their pleasure, between the world and God, they are yet acceptable, because sincere worshippers of Him,

who exacts the whole heart. And strange as it may seem, this is unhappily, most unhappily, the character of many active, zealous, and as they themselves would fain believe, consistent Christians. But it is one thing to be zealously and quite another thing to be consistently a Christian. Many a one is there sound in the faith, submissive in obedience to the church, exemplary in the observance of religious ordinances and private devotion, who yet fulfils not his relative duties. In every public, in every private act of religion, these men are unimpeachable, but they are destitute of charity; they want the practical benevolence, the kindness and humbleness of mind, the meekness, the forbearance, which ought equally to characterize the Christian: their judgment of others is uncandid and severe, their tongues too are unbriddled; or they are impatient of dissent, disregardful, haughty, unforgiving, or inhospitable, ungenerous, avaricious; they possess and allow in themselves some few or some one of the infinite number of sins, of vices, of the uncorrected feelings, unhallowed passions, unsanctified affections, which spring up and flourish only in a heart, not, as it ought to be, renewed by the Holy Ghost, and governed by its influences. They seem to be religious, they honestly believe themselves to be so, like the sentenced in the text, they would expostulate with God himself; but they deceive their own hearts,—their religion is vain, their faith is right, but it is not a lively, vigorous, heart-controlling principle; their devotions are regular, but they are acts of cold obedience, not of spontaneous duty, of ardent, grateful love, or firm, confiding trust. *They are not doing*, in heart and in deed, *the will of our Father which is in heaven.*

Is this a harsh commentary, a too melancholy explication of the text? Judge then for yourselves my brethren; imagine yourselves at the grated window of some monastic prison; look into the cell of that mild, self-denying Romanist, or into the closet of that stern Reformer: both are alone, both are on their knees, each in his own way pouring out his soul to God, where no eye but His own is thought to witness, in calm and fervent and sincere devotion. The one, is celebrating mass before ordering the sentence of the Inquisition to be executed

on a young mother and her unborn babe;—the other is imploring a blessing on the intended murder of his friend. And these are the disciples of the mild Redeemer! Blessed Jesus! followers of thee, and in thy name working their iniquities!

The mischiefs may be different, opposite, but their inconsistency is the same, be it ever so variously manifested. There are many others, who are models of holy zeal and fervor, of love and kindness, of meekness and purity, in their general deportment; a beautiful outside of humility; while within, they are the prey of spiritual corruption, of pride and vanity. Their godliness is mixed up with a presumptuous contempt of rites which God himself has instituted, of customs and ceremonies which ancient usage has rendered venerable: "despising dominion," "speaking evil of dignities," "in doctrine shewing corruptness," "wresting the word of God," giving "private interpretations" of scripture, making use of apparent self-abasement and strictness and sanctity, not to establish peace and unity, religion and piety around them to the glory of God; but to promote heresy and schism, to create sects and strengthen parties, to the advancement of their own fame and influence and the gratification of their own vanity.

But enough: each moral virtue, each Christian grace would furnish us examples numberless. It is a sad thought for poor human nature to reflect how many, many, there are who deceive themselves, and a still more sad one, how many at the great reckoning, will expostulate with such ill founded hopes, such unavailing honesty, only to receive the answer of, "I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity."

True holiness is like the fair tint of the lily or the snow; it is only the proper combination of all the bright colors of the rainbow which produces that pure whiteness; and there must exist and harmonize an assemblage of graces and virtues and external duties, to form the other. Godliness does not excuse from rites and ordinances and all the outward reverence of devotion; nor does the most laborious observance of religious duties, dispense with the strictest purity of heart and innocence of life. The severest exactions of constancy and

self-denial, from these frail mortal bodies, do not compensate, for the want of meekness and kindness and humbleness of mind; but yet is not the most fervent charity, with every earthly virtue, any acceptable compromise for a true and lively faith in Him whom God hath sent, our most blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

By a bold figure, the apostle calls Christians temples of God, and the works of that wise master-builder teach us that repentance, faith, and that good tone of feeling, which in Scripture phrase is love or charity, must form the unseen foundation on which to rear the beautiful superstructure of visible religion, tangible benevolence.

Would to God! Would to God! this lovely moral symmetry were more highly valued—were oftener exemplified; that a larger proportion of the many who say "Lord, Lord," exhibited in their lives and conversation, an obedience to the commandments and a submission to "the will of our Father which is in heaven."

My brethren, it becomes us as rational men to apprehend the importance of this subject, to bring it home to ourselves, individually. It becomes us carefully to examine, and strive thoroughly to understand, what is the will of our Father in heaven, and humbly and fervently imploring the assistance of the blessed Comforter, endeavor to follow it *in all things*. Remembering always the day of judgment and remembering the sad prophecy of our Saviour, "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity."

May the merciful God indeed enable us rightly to understand his blessed and most holy will, and also give us grace so to practice it during our probation here, that, when we shall be summoned forth to hear our doom, and you and I be ranged together before the judgment bar, we may escape the dreadful sentence of "depart," and live forever to ascribe glory and honour and praise and power to God our Redeemer, our Justifier, and our everlasting Saviour.

SERMON XVI.

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THE FORM AND POWER OF GODLINESS.

2 TIMOTHY, III, 5.

HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS, BUT DENYING THE POWER THEREOF.

THE religion of the Gospel commends itself to the belief and observance of mankind, by the excellence of its doctrines and precepts. It is worthy of its divine author, and nicely adapted to the condition and wants of his intelligent creatures. Its external form of godliness is beautiful and attractive; and it possesses the power, through the spirit of God, to transform and sanctify human nature; and to prepare it for its future glorious destination. It is not necessary, that I should now prove to you the imperfection and corruption of mankind. They who know themselves are conscious, that *the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.* This imperfection and corruption is the cause of that tendency in human nature, over which, in reading the pages of ecclesiastical history, we have so often occasion to sigh—the tendency

to blend the purity and excellence of Christianity with conceptions of doctrine and practice. I shall not attempt to trace the operations of this cause, and the endless evils which, from age to age, it has brought into the world. The Saviour foresaw their introduction, and in different parts of the New Testament, his disciples are cautioned against them. They were predicted in this chapter, and the terms which the apostle uses in his description of them, are very striking. He speaks of a time when the beauty and excellence of Christianity would be greatly obscured, and its professors would act in a manner incompatible with its spirit and precepts. He mentions their inordinate selfishness, their covetousness, their boasting that they had peculiar intercourse, and were high in favor with God, their blasphemy in their representations of his will and character, and their unkindness, ingratitude, and unholy dispositions. The persons whom he describes, were destitute of natural affections; regardless of the most solemn covenants; slanderers of those who held to the truth; furious against all who opposed their corruptions; obstinate in the maintenance of error; actuated by a spirit of pride and censoriousness; and loving pleasure more than God. Notwithstanding all this, they made great pretensions to sanctity—in outward profession they were religious, but virtually denied the power of religion. They *had a form of godliness, but denied its power.*

By the possession of a form of godliness with the denial of its power, the apostle means an empty profession of religion, the profession of the outward form, without the substance—the outward appearance, without the influence of religion, either upon the heart or life.

The essential form of religion, is perfectly drawn in the scriptures. And it is obvious, that those forms which materially differ from the one, which they have delineated, cannot be that form, which, as the followers of Jesus Christ, we ought to adopt. The form of religion has been often changed by the introduction of human inventions. These changes have given use to new organizations; and religion is presented in a

variety of differing systems; between which, men, in general, direct their choice rather by caprice, fancy, or interest, than by a regard to divine truth, and to the conclusions of reason. There is only one true form of religion given us in the word of God. It may be a part of our trial as rational and accountable creatures, to discover, and adopt that form in its original simplicity and beauty. It is a necessary part of religion: and without it, the profession of religion is certainly defective. But to constitute true religion, the form and the power must be united. The profession of the form only, like a picture drawn upon paper, is to have a mere representation of the reality. It is the representation, but not the thing itself. Without the internal and spiritual effects of its power, it has no real value—if its emptiness be discovered, it becomes disgusting to men, it is odious in the sight of God.

The design and end of religion, is virtue and godliness in this life, and beyond this scene of trial, happiness and glory forever. That profession of religion which does not tend to the accomplishment of this design and end, terminates in the outward appearance. It is the mere outward form—the external representation—not the substance—not the reality of religion. In this kind of profession, men draw near to God with their mouths, and honor him with their lips, while their hearts are unaffected, and far from him. The proper object of religious profession is spiritual renovation; but in this case, this, if considered at all, is regarded as of secondary importance; and the real object desired and sought for is the notice of men, and the temporary and worldly influence of which it may be an instrument.

The observance of the external forms of religion should be an indication of inward piety and holiness, and of the renewing and sanctifying power of divine grace exerted upon the soul; and all observance which is not of this character, not being made in spirit and in truth, degenerates either into hypocrisy or superstition. Some persons seem to rest their hopes of salvation upon the purity of the faith which they profess; but the faith which is not sustained by works is dead. There can

be no justifying faith which does not, in its influence, reach the heart and life. St. Paul says, *though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.* Men may profess the theory of religion —they may have the form of godliness, while in truth they practically deny its power. There have been examples of this in every age. They may perhaps have come within our own observation. It is even possible, that we ourselves, may, on examination, be found to rest in outward forms—having imperceptibly lost the influence of the power on which their efficacy depends. It is a proper subject for caution. It is indeed a subject which should excite our constant and deep solicitude, that in our religion the form and the substance be blended in one faith and practice.

There may be enthusiasm, without what the apostle means by the power of godliness, and there is no form in which men rest, more illusive and dangerous than this.

Some persons rest in sorrow for sin, without aiming at the change of dispositions of their hearts, and the reformation of their lives. They delude themselves with the hope that their practical repentance will be accepted. Repentance however, to be effectual, must include something more than sorrow—it must be complete. It is radically defective, if it does not reach to every known sin. No repentance is genuine which has not for its object the freeing of the soul from all pollution, and implanting virtuous principles and affections; and that repentance which stops short of this is essentially defective.

The worship of religious assemblies, the sacramental institutions of the Gospel, and all those rites which pertain to religious services, help to make up the outward form of godliness. They may be outwardly observed with strictness, and apparent solemnity, and yet their power—the inward and spiritual grace, may not be felt. All of religion, that we really possess, may terminate in the outward observance. If the heart be not engaged in the observance, the use of the form produces no spiritual good—it wants the quality which is neces-

sary to give it efficacy—the quality, without which, it is an empty service—destitute of claim to the acceptance of our heavenly Father.

All forms of religion receive their value from the power of godliness. We may not be able perhaps, exactly to define the power of godliness, or to acquaint you with its nature and operation. To understand it perfectly, we must consider both the cause, and the effect.

As a cause, it is the force of divine truth—it is an inward and spiritual grace—the efficacious working of the divine spirit on the heart and mind.

As an effect, it is the change wrought in the natural man, a faith which embraces religion as a reality—a spirit of piety pervading the soul—a love of holiness inseparable from its practice, a sincere devotion, a cheerful submission to the will of God—affections set on spiritual and divine things—that transformation by which we are crucified unto the world, and the world unto us; by which we have our conversation in heaven, and walking in the spirit are enabled to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. He who, in his religious practice, combines the form with the power of godliness, will be strong in faith, will be actuated by the fear and love of God, will be resigned and submissive to his will, and will pursue the paths of piety and virtue. In the use of forms, Christians should feel the vital energy of their power. It is the life and spirit which they outwardly express, that give them an inward efficacy, and in our observance of them, procure our acceptance. To all spiritual purposes, without the life, and spirit, and the fruits of righteousness, they are an unavailing service.

I would not be thought to undervalue the external forms of religion. They are designed, as means of grace, to promote our advancement in the Christian course. But no exercises of devotion, no use of the means of grace, no constancy in the performance of external rites, can bring to the soul true peace and comfort, if they have no effect in forming the heart anew to piety and holiness. The influence of religion must reach both to the dispositions of the soul, and to the ac-

tions of the life—and that influence must not be inconstant and wavering—on the contrary, it must be firm and lasting, resulting in self-mortification, in victory over the world, and in the fruits of righteousness.

Where this influence is not felt, the form is without the power; and there is a virtual denial of it, which no doubt must be an aggravation of guilt.

Having the form of godliness, it should be our earnest endeavour to manifest its power, in raising us from the death unto sin, to a new and holy life; and in bringing us from darkness into light, and in renewing our souls to the love and practice of holiness. This is indeed the blessed design of the Gospel, and we should never be satisfied with ourselves, until we have the fullest evidence that it has been accomplished in us. Let me now ask you, Brethren, has this gracious design been accomplished in you? In your practice of religion has the form and power of godliness been blended? In your use of the means of grace have you known and felt their spiritual energy? Has the power of godliness softened, changed, and formed anew your spiritual character?

Brethren, the subject of our text is one of great importance. We are all interested in it. You, and I. We are all bound to possess the form of godliness, to have our hearts warmed, and renewed by its power, and to display its influence over our natural passions and desires, and the actions of our life. We do possess, in the constitution of our Church, in her articles of faith, and in her system of worship—scripture, primitive, and evangelical, a form of godliness of surpassing excellence. Our privileges—our advantages in these respects are undoubted. But are we in zeal, in holiness, in christian exertion, what they ought to be, who possess a form so spiritual and perfect? We entertain no doubt of its value, of its unrivalled beauty and excellence, and of its claims to universal acceptance; but are we practically acquainted with its spirit, and willing subjects of its power? Have our hearts been warmed, and quickened, and sanctified in its use? Practically, we deny its power, if in one case, this have not been its effect.

Let the question then be put directly, have we, in its use, been spiritually benefitted? Has it helped to sustain us in our outward course towards the kingdom of heaven? Have we no reason to fear, that in the use of our form of godliness, we are justly chargeable with lukewarmness and formality? What is our sense of responsibility, when we join in our solemn religious services? Are we actuated by an ardent desire to blend the outward emblems with the spirit which they denote? My dear Brethren, what is the answer, which we, individually, and collectively, are able to give to these questions? Alas! how far are we from that love of God; that fervour of religious feeling; that devotion to the service of God; and that spirituality of mind, which ought to pervade the souls and to be manifested in the lives of those who are blessed with the spiritual privileges, which we as Churchmen possess. Present the subject to yourselves in its different relations, contrast your form—your privileges, with your feelings—your spirituality—your practice. Examine your claim to the acceptance of God—your title to receive his spiritual mercies. Have you any reasonable ground to hope for present, and future justification? Oh, deceive not yourselves. Trust not, I beseech you, my beloved Brethren, in the mere outward acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as your Saviour—rest not in the mere use of your primitive, and evangelical forms of religion. Oh, do not practically deny their power—hold not, I entreat you, the form without the substance. Be spiritually minded, and remain not satisfied with yourselves for one hour, if in our public devotions, and religious solemnities, your hearts are not kindled into fervour; and you do not enjoy the hope, and peace, and consolation which the Gospel promises to spiritual worshippers. But are your hearts thus kindled, and are you truly partakers of this peace, hope, and consolation? If you are not, where does the fault lie? Can there be a doubt that it is not in the form, but in the practical denial of the power of godliness. And they who are not blessed with peace, hope, and consolation, must charge the fault upon themselves. The truth is, if we are faulted of our spiritual mercies, it is owing

to our formality, or lukewarmness, or unbelief. And if, with all our means of grace, and opportunities of salvation, we be thus faulted, how great will be our guilt—how aggravated our condemnation!

Religion is presented in a great variety of forms. We have already remarked that the inventions of men have often changed the system of Christian faith, and the worship and organization of the Christian Church. In the nature of things, there can be but one which we are bound to adopt—for the very obvious reason, that the scriptures contain the delineation of only one. But even in this age, they are constantly multiplying, and now are so extravagant, or absurd, as not to gain adherents. They are, however, for the most part, the offspring of religious excitement, and men decide to embrace them on the ground of feeling. The heart, so desperately wicked and deceitful, furnishes their only logic.

The Church of which we are members, more than any other, possesses the character of permanence and stability. Her form is not calculated to produce, nor does she desire periodical, mechanical, and tumultuous excitement. But her services are calculated to warm, and animate the devotional affections; and to cherish a spirit of uniform, rational and sublime piety. Their pure, spiritual and evangelical nature are equally removed from the heresy and fanaticism—the rational, and mechanical systems by which men would advance the cause of religion. She claims attachment and communion, on the best of all grounds,—on the ground of principle—not on the ground of uncertain, undefined, and ever varying feeling excited in the heart; but on the ground of divine institution, and divine appointment. On no other ground ought our religious association to be determined, and on no other, can it ever be determined with safety. What is the will of God should be our only enquiry; and that clearly ascertained should be our will, and our choice.

SERMON XVII.

BY THE REV. T. STRONG. A. M.
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CHRIST THE RANSOM AND HOPE OF THE SINNER.

MICAH, VI. 6.

WHEREWITH SHALL I COME BEFORE THE LORD AND BOW MYSELF BEFORE THE HIGH GOD.

If the human race had never been placed beneath the power and penalty of sin; if the hearts and affections of the children of men were uniformly fixed upon the things which belong to their everlasting peace, and if their lives were marked by no deviations from the path of virtue and holiness,—still, it could not be an uninteresting consideration with them how they might approach the presence of the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, and in what manner and with what expectations they might hold communion and intercourse with the Being upon whom they were dependent for every temporal enjoyment and for the fulfilment of all the hopes which pointed to immortality. Their relation to the great Supreme, even in a state of innocence and of purity, would render a knowledge of his character most important to their happiness; and from the circumstance that their present condition was in subjection to his providence and government, and that their final destinies were entirely at his disposal, they would find it of the highest concern to obtain correct views of his nature and disposition.

The sincerity and the constancy of their offerings, with the perfection of their confidence, their obedience and their love, would depend upon their assurance of the paternal and protecting care of the Diety whom they worshipped; and that deep sense of personal obligation, derived not merely from the experience of temporal benefits, but, also, from the hope of future glory, which could alone unite them by a sacred bond to the author of their existence, would need, both for its excitement and its perpetuity, the sanctifying influence of those devout contemplations which had for their object the essential attributes of the Creator as involving the dearest interests of his creatures.

And if the necessities of mankind, in a state which had never been debased by the introduction and the ravages of sin, would lead them to seek, and to esteem as most precious, such a knowledge of God as might regulate their services, exalt their affections and confirm their trust, with what increased force are they urged to the inquiry when sinking under the pressure of accumulated transgressions? If indifference to the divine character would not become a righteous person, how strong should be the motive to its examination in those whose hearts and lives have been corrupt and perverse from the beginning? To such, indeed, the question of our text is ap-aplicable, and the subject which it presents for consideration is of unspeakable importance to us all. The language of the holy scriptures, in describing the human character, is of the most decided and unequivocal kind. It sets forth, in a clear and comprehensive manner, the cause and the extent of that great moral disorder which has made the world we inhabit the melancholy scene of sorrow and of death. With the deepest solemnity, and in terms which none but the blind and the obstinate can misunderstand, it declares the lamentable fact, that in consequence of the disobedience and the fall of our *first parents*, a righteous sentence of condemnation was passed upon all men; that in *their* forfeiture of the privileges

and expulsion from the delights of the terrestial Eden, the gates of the paradise on high became closed against their descendants; and that the cherubim and the flaming sword which guarded the way of the tree of life from the approach of the apostate pair, was illustrative of that exhibition of divine justice which rendered the grave, in its darkness and its desolation, the boundery of hope to every succeeding generation. It teaches us that in our depraved natures, our evil passions and our confirmed acts of iniquity, we are all guilty before God; that we have provoked his just displeasure and indignation, and that, for our manifold and aggravated offences we are liable to the awful and extreme severity of his punishments. And to the truth of these representations, the general history of mankind and the unbiassed consciences of individuals, in all ages and nations, bear ample corroborative testimony.

From the remotest periods of antiquity, and among those upon whom the light of revelation never dawned, a prevailing sense of sinfulness and exposure to suffering, as its just desert, has been manifested. The most barbarous and ignorant of the heathen have felt, though without any definite or correct idea of the truth, that they were not, naturally, in a state of favor with the powers above them; that, for some inexplicable reason, moral infirmities and imperfections were the appointed portion of humanity, and that the most costly sacrifices were required in order to obtain the benefits which they desired, and to avert the judgments that they feared. And, hence, it has happened, that no country or tribe, of which we have any account, has been altogether without a system of religion that did not provide some method by which it was imagined that sin might be forgiven and the gods propitiated. The impressions and sentiments, moreover, that, in these particulars, have been common to pagan societies, notwithstanding the deplorable superstitions with which they have too often been blended, were far from being slight or accidental.

The belief and the convictions that have been entertained, possessed an influence over every concern and relation of life; and the supposed heinousness of faults committed, and the apprehended extent of evils dreaded, may be learnt from the fact that, to make atonement for the former, or to stay the progress of the latter, the strong sympathies of natural affection have been stifled, and the shoutings of the parent have triumphed over the dying agonies of the immolated child.

It is common for those who have been blessed with the benefits, and who know how to appreciate the excellence of the christian dispensation,to commiserate the darkness and delusion which have shrouded pagan lands. They read with emotions of horror, mingled with the deepest pity and compassion, the sad records which exhibit the operations and effects of a religion that seem founded altogether upon the principle of fear, and which gives its sanction to the direst deeds of cruelty and of blood. Their hearts rise within them as they reflect upon the revolting scenes which every where meet the eye amidst the idolatries of the people that know not God; and, in the view of murdered victims of every age and condition, their prayers and their exertions are united for the introduction of the pure and sanctifying faith of the gospel into those regions of ignorance and wo. But the characters and the conduct, which thus excite our sorrow and our benevolence are, fraught with lessons of instruction that concern our own profession and belief. They add to the proofs of that spiritual alienation from God and holiness, which the scriptures declare to be universal, and they furnish, also, an argument of no little weight in support of the necesity of the sufferings of innocence as an atonement for human guilt. There is no natural connexion, that we can possibly comprehend, between the offering of sacrifices, in itself considered, and the bestowment of the divine mercy and forgiveness. Nor can we conceive, when we look at the practice as it has always prevailed among the heathen, without any

reference to the revelation that God has placed in our hands, what association of ideas, what direction of habit, or what exercise of reason, should ever have led to its adoption. But when we compare their customs with the accounts which the volume of inspiration has given us of transactions, intended, under the immediate appointment of the Most High, for the accomplishment of the same object, and when we perceive that the latter derived their whole value from their allusion to the great event which they were designed to prefigure, the death of Jesus Christ, we have, indeed, something of a guide to the origin of the former, and are, consequently, justified in considering them among the evidences of that fact which forms the subject of the most prominent and the most interesting article of our faith.

The probability is, and it is strengthened by the earliest scripture notices, that, immediately upon the apostacy of our first parents and the promise of a deliverer from the degraded state into which they had fallen, sacrifices were instituted with express reference to the method in which the sins of the world were, in the fullness of time, to be expiated, and that the tradition, in some form, was continued down through every branch of the family of Noah. That the original object and allusion should soon be lost, where there was no written revelation to secure them, cannot be deemed strange when we consider the character of mankind, and the changes which are continually taking place in the world. The thing itself, as a rite essential to religion would, nevertheless, remain ;— and, as soon as this became observed for its own sake, and honored for the imaginary merit which it possessed in itself, nothing could be more natural in the selection of victims for the altar, than to suppose those would be most availing in the sight of God, which were most dear and precious in the estimation of man. Hence, under the powerful excitement of religious enthusiasm, the strongest ties of nature were easily dissolved, and the parent became not only willing, but

eager to purchase the favor of heaven with the blood of a devoted child. And hence, too, is derived all that variety of sacrifice, which, among ignorant and barbarous nations, has been so shocking to the feelings of civilized humanity, and so powerful in its claims upon the active benevolence of all who have inherited the true and holy faith.

Considering, then, the state and character of mankind as sinners, exposed to the wrath of an offended God, to be determined by revelation and confirmed by the history of the world, to which we may also add the dictates of conscience in every individual who has not become hardened by transgression, we are prepared to estimate the importance of the inquiry in the text:—"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God?" From the connexion of these words, as they appear in the book of the prophet, it is evident that they refer to the way in which we are to approach the presence of our Maker with the hope that he will look graciously upon us, and forgive us our iniquities. It is not, however, to the act of prayer and supplication alone that our thoughts are to be directed by them, but to that general contemplation of the character and perfections of the Supreme being in which our eternal prospects are involved, and to all those feelings which are connected with the grand and interesting subjects of accountability, and immortality. Viewing ourselves as sinners, and liable on account of our offences, to the full weight of the divine displeasure, with what offering or qualification can we come before the God of Heaven, with the assurance that he will receive us into his favor, and make us to participate in the abundance of his mercy and loving-kindness? Although he has declared himself to be angry with the wicked every day; and notwithstanding the dreadful effects of his wrath which have often been experienced in desolating judgments by a guilty world, we have every reason to suppose that he is, in himself, essentially and infinitely good and benevolent; that he wills the happiness and not the misery of his creatures, and that

the punishment which he, at any time, inflicts, is, indeed, as expressed by the sacred writer, "his strange work." But, with our depraved natures and unholy lives, how are we to obtain an interest in his benevolence consistently with the satisfaction that is due to his dishonored government and his violated justice? Sacrifices and burnt-offerings, in their own nature, however numerous or valuable they may be, are of no avail—repentance, though deep and agonizing, cannot, by any virtue it possesses in itself, change the desert of former crimes; and obedience, to give sanction to any claims of approbation and reward, must be distinguished, not only for its sincerity, but, also, for its constancy and its perfection. Where, then, is the hope of the fallen transgressor! Where is that foundation of security upon which he may rest for the salvation of his soul? To what system and to what object can he look for the provision and the ability which may shield him from the penalty and the curse denounced upon every offender, and make easy his entrance into the abodes of life everlasting? "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD THAT TAKETH AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD!" "*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah—this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat? I have trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with me.*"

Here, then, blessed be God, we are made acquainted with an offering which is sufficient for all our necessities. In the sacrifice that was consummated upon the cross, we may find a remedy for all our spiritual diseases—a sure method of deliverance from every evil to which our wickedness has exposed us. And this, too, we may plead in our behalf when we "come before the Lord, and bow ourselves before the high God," with a complete and unwavering certainty and confidence that it will prevail in procuring the remission of our sins and the inheritance of endless felicity in heaven. A

way is thus provided for the recovery, the safety and the happiness of fallen man, in which justice and mercy, righteousness and truth are wonderfully and gloriously combined, and wherein the wisdom of the exalted majesty of heaven and earth is clearly manifested, and his holiness thoroughly and sublimely vindicated. Here we are led to behold and admire the extent of that love by which the dispensations of Jehovah in regard to our helpless and guilty race, are influenced; while, at the same time, we are supplied with the strongest and purest motives to devote ourselves, unreservedly, with all our faculties of soul and body, to the service of that compassionate Redeemer who has relieved our greatest wants, and ransomed us freely from the destruction to which we are liable.

In the improvement of our subject, let me urge upon you, my brethren, the vast importance of having your principles well established upon this great fundamental of our holy religion, and of cultivating, under the guidance of the blessed spirit, that true and living faith by which the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ are to be apprehended and enjoyed. It cannot be supposed, for a moment, that any one who believes, with sincerity, in the christian system, as a revelation from God to man, is *professedly* daring to rest his hopes of forgiveness and his expectations of heaven upon the merits of any thing which is not derived from this source. No one who pretends to the character and the privileges of a disciple, will be so bold as to declare, in opposition to the whole tenor of the Bible, that he can "come before the Lord, and bow himself before the high God," with a sure confidence and trust, that mercy and peace will be caused to flow to him through some other channel than that which proceeds from the blood of the victim who hung upon the cross of Calvary. But it may be that there is, in practice, an actual dependence, altogether at variance with the faith that has been imbibed and the professions that are made. So

deceitful is the human heart, and so closely interwoven with our natures are the passions of pride and self-love, that we are never free from the danger of estimating what the Gospel will not warrant us as the procuring cause of our salvation. Or, at least, we are prone to divide the merit upon which eternal life is suspended, between the Saviour and our own performances and qualifications, and even to attribute the greater part to the latter. There are many things which are to be considered as excellent and praise-worthy, which are required of us by the precepts of the gospel; which are necessary as evidences and fruits of our faith, and to which even the recompense of reward is promised—but they are not our *Saviour's*, although their absence may prove us unfit for an inheritance with the saints in light. The kind affections and sympathies of the heart, the conscientious performance of those moral duties which are essential to the welfare of communities, families and individuals, and a regular and devout observance of the various ordinances and appointments which are numbered with the means of grace—all these are demanded of us as christians, and, when exhibited in sincerity and consistency, under the exercise of that faith which has the Son of God for its author and its object, are acceptable in the sight of our Maker, and profitable in advancing our progress, and assimilating our tempers to the society of the redeemed in heaven. Still, they claim not the high honor of having broken down the barrier which interposed between the transgressions of the creature, and the mercy of the Creator; they possess not the worthiness that could transform us from aliens and rebels, into children and heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. This belongs wholly, exclusively, to the divine Immanuel; for *there is no other name given under heaven among men, whereby they can be saved.*

In every service, therefore, and in every direction of our minds to the things that are unseen and eternal, let us remember and feel that it is only by aid through Christ Jesus, that we can be justified before God; that he alone *is the way, and the truth, and the life*, and that every other foundation of

hope and trust, will be worthless and unavailing. And that our gratitude and our love may, in some measure, correspond with our obligations, and excite us to the zealous and continued practice of piety and holiness, let us accustom ourselves to deep and serious reflections upon that state in which we were placed by reason of sin, and upon the greatness of our deliverance, discovered in those exceeding precious promises which open to our view all the glories of the celestial world in reserve for our enjoyment forever. And thus shall we "come before the Lord, and bow before the high God," with that faith in the offering of Jesus Christ, which will fill us even now with the peace that passeth all understanding, and insure our final justification and acceptance when we stand at the tribunal of our Judge.—Amen.

SERMON XVIII.

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THE PATH OF THE JUST.

PROVERBS iv. 18.

THE PATH OF THE JUST, IS AS THE SHINING LIGHT, WHICH SHINETH MORE AND MORE UNTO THE PERFECT DAY.

The Scriptures frequently employ the terms, "light and darkness," to illustrate the varieties in the moral characteristics of men. In the text, connected with its succeeding verse, the wise author of the Book of Proverbs has applied these terms for an accurate delineation of the characters and expectations of two separate classes of men. In an antithesis, not more beautiful than just, he has described the different effects of a religious and unholy life;—the tranquility, pleasure and assurance, which are consequent upon the

one, and the anxiety, sorrow and despair, which are of necessity produced by the other. While the Christian's path, with the pure light of heaven, shines with increasing brilliancy until the measure of its power is lost in a perfect day,—"the way of the wicked is as darkness,—they know not at what they stumble." Their path is filled with snares and dangers,—over which no beam of light can pass,—to warn them of approaching evil. And sadness, and terror, and ruin, settle around all their ways.

Though a progressive character is here assigned only to the path of the just, it is quite evident, that in the moral application of the figure, it belongs with equal truth to the way of the wicked. The reason of this limitation is, that in the language which is here used, the illustration was incapable of being farther extended. If darkness so thick, that all power of discrimination has passed away, and they know not at what they stumble, now marks the way of sinners, no increase of obscurity can be imagined.

But, however bright and overpowering any present light may be, we can easily conceive of a vast increase of its power. It was at noon day, when the natural sun was shining in the fullness of its strength, that Saul of Tarsus beheld a light from heaven, so far exceeding it, that its power was forgotten, and the sun was hidden, not in darkness, but in the greater display of the boundless glory of God.

Not more truly in fact, does increasing vigilance purify and extend the holiness of the child of God, than do multiplying transgressions render more aggravated, and impenetrable, the guilt and hardness of the unconverted heart. And just as surely as the more abundant recompense of glory will be provided for the man who for many years has ceased not to grow in conformity to the image of the Son of God, will the aged transgressor, the man who from youth, to grey hairs, has continued to go astray, meet with a retribution, some in proportion to the duration of his guilt.

A stationary character, among the moral and accountable creatures of Jehovah, is a matter of impossibility. He who

is not daily approximating to the light of life, is sinking with increasing certainty, into that blackness of darkness, of which the sealing and most terrifying distinction is, that it is forever. We are only deceiving ourselves, if we suppose not, that while careless and unreconciled to God, the sins of tomorrow shall be as this day, only more abundant; or if we look for any other result of transgression, than that the load will hourly accumulate, which is now sufficient to sink us into unutterable perdition. A reflection so solemn, upon the unavoidable tendency of a life, uncontrolled by the spirit, the motives, or the hopes of the Gospel, should lead reasonable men to desire those paths which multitudes of far higher intelligence have found to be alone productive of life and peace. "Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun,"—but far more blessed is his condition, whose heart, the dayspring from on high, hath visited, delivering him from darkness and the shadow of death, and guiding his feet into the way of peace.

It is this condition of the enlightened and justified man which is so beautifully described in our text, and which offers us for the present occasion, an instructive and delightful subject of remark:—

I. The persons, of whom the assertion of our text is made, will present our first subject of remark.—

The term *just*, we frequently meet in the sacred scriptures with an application, like that of our text, and yet, the allowance that any man were just in the sight of God, would seem to be inconsistent with the broad and unlimited statements which the scriptures contain of man's deep and inherent depravity, and alienation from God. "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and the imaginations of the thoughts of their heart are only evil continually." "There is not a just man on earth, that liveth and sinneth not." This being the universal description of a fallen race of beings, it will follow as a consequence too apparent, to be susceptible of proof, that in his natural character, or by his own strength, no man can be counted just or righteous before God.

But in the scriptural use of the term of our text, it will be found to have two applications, either of which will answer our present purpose; for indeed, they are of necessity, always found united, in the same individual. Man may be called *just*, because the prevailing habit of his life, is a practical obedience of the divine commands, though by no means delivered, from every stain of sin, and his constraining purpose of action, is an earnest desire, to become daily more conformed to the holy image and will of God. It is under this sin that Noah was said to be a "just man," and "perfect in his generations," and one who "walked with God," and Cornelius, a just man, and one who feared God.

Or man may be said to be just, because he is found in Jesus Christ, clothed with his righteousness, confiding in his obedience unto death, and freely justified, or made just, through the redemption, that there is in him. Under this view, it is said "the just by faith, shall live," and "being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." If we consider the term of our text as being before us, the character of man, under either of these aspects, as habitually, by divine grace, practically righteous in his conduct, or as perfectly justified and accepted, through the righteousness of another, we shall find it perfectly consistent, with the broadest exhibitions of man's natural depravity, and truly a subject, for the assertion which the text contains.

Then only is man, either generally holy in his character, or accounted just before God, when by the renewing power of the Holy Ghost, he has been converted from a natural state of guilt, and transformed into the image of God's dear Son. In the unregenerate heart, there is no good thing, no principle of holiness, no tendency to God, no trace of similitude to him. These principles from their very germ are all plants of a foreign and heavenly growth. The Holy Spirit, who is the great keeper of the vineyard of the Lord, implants them in the ground, which his own cultivation has prepared for their reception, and under his care and nurture, they flourish and bring forth fruit, unto life eternal. It is this spiritual conver-

sion to God, which manifests its progress, from infancy to strength, in the germination and growth, of every holy and heavenly principle, which flows from the unassisted power of God as its origin, and produces the mind, which was in Christ, as its result, which forms the only ground, upon which man, can be denominated just. The man who has experienced it, is a child of God, and of grace. He is just with God, because he has found acceptance in his beloved Son, and he is just with men, because the whole character of his life, is marked by overruling and increasing holiness. Of such an one, it may be said with truth, that his path, is as the shining light. He is a christian, a believer, a converted man, a child of God. He has been made so, by a new birth unto righteousness. He has just begun to live, for the great purpose, for which he was made, and has entered upon a path of increasing conformity to God, in which he shall walk forever.

II. This path, our text declares to be "as the shining light." The natural state of man, is a state of darkness: and the wicked or unconverted portion of men, are truly said, to "walk in darkness." Their minds are blinded through the ignorance that is in them. An impenetrable obscurity covers every object, with which it is important for them, to become acquainted. They are ignorant of their own characters and deserts. They are ignorant of the character and dealings of the God whom they are required and are bound to serve. They are blind to the fearful prospect of recompense which eternity spreads before them. They are ignorant of any means by which they may escape the awful condemnation of sin. And for all the purposes for which light has come into the world, they are in Egyptian darkness. They are pursuing their heedless course of life, catching eagerly at the phantoms, which are seen to cross their path, unconcerned for the dangers which surround their steps, and careless for all the evils, which the journey of another hour may reveal. Mark the infatuation, with which a sinner pursues, what he considers interest, or profit, or pleasure; utterly void of reflection upon any painful consequences, which he may be required to endure. Observe the pertinacity with which, upon the

very brink of interminable woe, he will plan his worldly enjoyments, for years to come, and follow the wanderings of the delusive light of sin, "as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not, that it is for her life." Behold him trifling and vain, when the vengeance of eternal fire, is brusting up before him, and then tell me what more evidence you ask of the blindness of an unconverted man?—or of the darkness, in which he walks?

While this is the natural state of man, when the "grace of God which bringeth salvation," is received into his heart, it comes to him, as a light from heaven, shining in a dark place. It illuminates that valley of the shadow of death, in which he has been lying down with so much contentment reveals to him, a thousand dangers, which he never saw before, and kindles amazement in his heart, at the grace, which would pluck him, from such degradation and ruin. It shines upon his own character and life, and displays to him, the repulsive deformity, the deep pollution, the entire alienation, from the life and image of God, which has, from the beginning, marked his soul, in the sight of his heart-searching judge. It shines back upon all the ways and attributes of the king of heaven, reveals him, as a Being, of unspotted holiness, and inflexibly just, and impresses upon the sinner's heart, the indelible conviction, that he has no hope for mercy on his own account; that if God should enter into judgment with him, he could not be justified. It shines with appalling brightness upon that lake, which burneth forever and ever, as the recompense of sin, and revealing thus the imminent necessity for immediate escape, it awakens an unconquerable desire, to be brought from darkness, so apparent and so fearful, to the marvellous light of a great salvation.

This desire, it gratifies abundantly. This illuminating grace, is not like the lightning, which casts a momentary glare, across the path of a midnight traveller, revealing for an instant, the brow of a precipice before him, merely to render the more terrific, the darkness, in which it leaves him. But, like the increasing power of the morning sun, it leads

him with thankfulness and confidence, to a day of peace. Again it shines, upon the blood stained cross of Jesus, and shews that, by an inestimable sacrifice, the ransom has been paid; upon the great mediator, standing before the throne of God, and convinces that there is one, able to save unto the uttermost, all who come unto him; upon a heavenly crown, brilliant with gems of eternal righteousness and peace, and fills the new born soul, with a longing wish, that he had the wings of a dove, that he might flee away, and be at rest. It shines upon the face of Jesus Christ, and as from an unerring mirror, its reflections upon the heart of the penitent sinner, are mercy and peace, and hope, and assurance forever. Thus for his own comfort and security, does the grace of God, come upon the sinner's soul, like a shining light.

But it shines, not for himself alone. By giving to his character, a heavenly illumination, as an example of every virtue, and every praise, it shines abroad a blessing invaluable to all. The path of the just, or the converted man, commences with this light from above, which in its first bestowal, it is true, shines only for himself, but which in its succeeding progress, manifests its presence and power to the world, by the holy effect which it produces, in his whole intercourse with men, and brings abundant glory to the name of God, by the conformity, to his image, which it displays. Like a city set upon a hill, the converted man cannot be concealed. He becomes to all, an object of remark; he is known and read of all men, and he testifies by the unvarying conduct of his life, that the renewing power which dwells and operates within him, is from no earthly origin, but cometh down from the great Father of lights, of whose immeasurable goodness, it is the evidence and result. This is the brightness which is shed upon the path of the just, which warms while it illuminates, and purifies, while it enlivens, and both in his own soul, and abroad to the world, shineth more and more, unto a perfect day.

III. The progressive character of the christian's path, is the third point set before us in our text. As originally he was in

darkness, and by the light of life, this darkness has been removed, so in his still succeeding steps, his illumination is gradual and increasing. When the light of the natural day first breaks upon our eyes, we behold it in the fairest streaks of purple, which shooting upwards from the horizon, strive in vain to reach the zenith; while we gaze upon its beauty, it rapidly increases upon our view. Its purple tints are lost in the splendour of its progress, and the whole hemisphere is filled with the glories of its illumination. So is it, when the day-spring from on high visits the benighted soul. In its first dawn, its apparent power is entirely imperfect. It reveals the objects of spiritual vision, truly indeed, as regards their reality, but altogether indistinct, in their colouring and dimensions. The sinner when first awakened, has but faint and unsatisfactory conceptions of the objects by which his attention is to be attracted. He sees men almost as trees walking. He but partially apprehends the extent of his own corruption and danger, and though he is truly aroused from his slumbers, by the grace of God, he can only generally ask, from an alarming consciousness of some great deficiency, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" This early dawning of conviction, sufficiently assures him of his necessity, though it does not manifest its full extent, and leads him earnestly to desire the arising upon his soul of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings, that his full conversion may be accomplished, and his prospect of deliverance be rendered sure and distinct.

When he has experienced that renewing grace, which transforms the child of wrath into the child of God, his light will shine more and more. He will go on from strength to strength, in the knowledge and love of God, till he becomes a perfect man in Christ Jesus. And whether we consider this indwelling light of grace, as shining for his own comfort and peace, or as exhibiting in his conduct, to the view of others, as in a transparent painting, the lovely and attractive features of the Son of God, it will be found, constantly to increase in its power and its effects, till it attains the point, which our text assigns as its conclusion, "a perfect day." The light which

shines from the example and character of a real child of God, extends its mild and lovely influence, even to the scenes and the inhabitants, of a world which lieth in wickedness; and universal kindness, and universal love, distinguishing the mind which was in Christ, mark the benign and holy dispositions, which he has implanted in every converted heart. This light is from a perfect source, and tends to perfection as its result. It came from God to man, and preparing man for the change, it carries him back, with itself to the God in whom it had its origin. Like the natural sun, in his morning's progress to a perfect aspect and influence, unlike him only in this, that the moment of perfection, is not the commencement of decline. The light of grace knows no exposure to decrease. To its whole period of existence, this life is but the morning's dawn. Through the succeeding ages of eternity, it becomes more and more perfect in perfection, and unceasingly approximating to the great source of light and life, it shines forever in the glories of his existence.

IV. This is the perfect day, to which our text has led us. This is the desirable result, when every thing mortal and infirm is swallowed up, in the immortal bliss of heaven. The Christian's perfect day, is never attained within the limits, of this fallen and distracted world. Here, sin has deformed every moral prospect, and tainted every lingering trait of moral purity, and we shall in vain hope to escape entirely, from its contaminating influence. Whatever be the extent of our progress in a spiritual life, we shall feel constrained, to the last expiration of mortal existence, to adopt the self-abasing conclusion of the apostle, "not as though I had already attained, either were already made perfect, but this one thing still I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus." Even, when to the observation of others, the Christian's path seems almost to have attained its perfect point, his own heart will shew him, some dark corners, where the renovating light has not yet shone in the fulness of its power.

But go with him one litte step, while he crosses the narrow limit, which separates earth from heaven, and you find the perfection of his character, no longer the mere subject for hope. All his infirmities and corruptions, are deposited forever in the grave, and his triumphant spirit, emancipated from her bonds and burdened with no retarding weight, ascends with unmingled joy, to the mansions, which her Redeemer hath prepared. There the Christian is perfect, and at home forever. He is received as a welcome child, by God the Father of all, by Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, by the eternal spirit of sanctifying grace. While every holy inhabitant of heaven rejoices, that another voice, is to sing the praise of Jesus, and another harp to swell the triumphs of his love. There where sin is not permitted to intrude its hateful form, where every aspect of rebellion is unknown, where sorrow and sighing are utter strangers, where every thing that can enhance the happiness, or extend the glory of the child of God, is unalterably secured to his possession, we may behold "the perfect day." Purified from all sin, the spirit of the just man, is made perfect in holiness. Delivered from all suffering, he is made perfect in bliss. United forever to the God, whom he has loved, whatever happiness, the power of God, is competent to bestow, is assured to him. And through the succeeding ages of an eternal state, he finds God is continually adding to his recompense such enjoyments, as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

This "perfect day," is the sure result of the path of the just or converted man, whose progress from the bondage of natural guilt, to the glorious kingdom of the living God, we have now traced. He was found, lost in the darkness and shadow of death; God looked upon him in this wretched condition, with the tenderest compassion, loved him, when he knew nothing and cared nothing for him, and by the power of his spirit, awakened him, converted him, and purified him for his presence in glory. The divine grace of Jesus has enlightened his darkness, leads him on, in paths of holines and peace,

enables him to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour, in all things, and stablishing, strengthening, and settling him, renders him meet to become a partaker of the inheritance, of the saints in light. Unlimited and sovereign grace, rescued him from his death in trespasses and sins. Unlimited and sovereign grace, brings him at last in triumph, freely justified and fully sanctified, there to rest forever, where is the fulness of joy, and where are pleasures forevermore.

V. In concluding this subject with a solemn personal application, let me honestly ask every hearer, have you ever received this new creating light of grace? Have you ever been brought from the guilt and ruin of an unregenerated state, to the knowledge and love of the Gospel? In looking back upon the transgressions and ignorance of former periods of your life, and beholding with thankfulness, a radical and entire change in your affections and your conduct, can you say, "whereas I was blind, now I see?" Do the effects and the power of religion, as found in your conduct and experiences, convince you, that the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth? Unless God hath shined in your hearts, to give you a knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, you are in darkness, until now. Look at the prevailing affections of your hearts, and see whether you are the child, or the enemy of God; are they spiritual and heavenly? or are they bound beyond the power of momentary liberation, to the things of time and sense! Have you any experience of the love of God, shed abroad in your heart, by the Holy Ghost. Look at the habitual character of your external conduct, and do you manifest the mind, which was in Christ? Not conformed to this world, but transformed in the renewing of your mind, is your conduct an illustration of the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God? Or are you worldly, sensual and unrestrained, in the example, which you habitually manifest before men? About such evidences as these, there can be no mistake, and if light and darkness do fairly characterize the eternally diverging paths of the righteous and the

wicked, as well might light and darkness be confounded, as these paths exhibit to you, the same appearances.

But while there are some of you, whose hearts, the Lord has visited in mercy, see that your light shine more and more. As months and years pass away, see that there is a holy and honourable improvement in your character and life. Your growth may not be rapid, though it be sure. The tree, whose increasing measure, you cannot daily determine, the lapse of a year will shew you, to have been constantly and much enlarging itself. Be not discouraged, though your progress appear slow; wait upon the Lord, and he shall renew your strength. Maintain a habit of sincere communion with him, and he will never say to you, seek ye my face in vain. Keep your heart steadfastly fixed upon the end of your vocation, look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. Draw daily from his living fountain, and however slow and feeble may at times, appear its influx upon your soul, it shall be a well of water within you, springing up unto everlasting life. By fervent prayer, by unremitting watchfulness, and by a decided determination to avoid all known transgression; by a simple dependance upon the strength of God and the renewing grace of his Spirit, you will go on, conquering and to conquer, and will daily find, your most formidable enemies, put in subjection under your feet; and though your light shine but dimly now, the fact that it shines at all, is abundant ground for encouragement, that it shall be made to shine more and more, unto the perfect day. Go on then, with persevering diligence. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "He that endureth to the end, shall be saved." And when the terrible light of a final and resistless conviction shall in the great and awful day break upon those who now reject the light of the Gospel grace, and the remembrance of accumulated ingratitude and transgression, of grace rejected and love despised, shall burst like a flood upon the souls of the guilty, and sweep away their feigned excuses, their paltry

pleas for sin, and no longer able to be blind, they will and must see, the ruin which they have brought upon themselves, you shall lift up your heads with joy, for your redemption will have come, and the morning of a perfect day will bring unutterable rejoicing to your souls. May the Angel of the covenant keep you all your lives long, and bring you in triumph and peace, to an eternal dwelling in your Father's house.

The Publisher of the American Episcopal Pulpit, cannot refrain from expressing his unfeigned gratitude to those friends who have kindly smiled on his humble efforts to promote the cause of Christ and the Church by "rendering the labours of our Clergy more extensively useful"---to the Rev. Gentlemen who have contributed to the value and interest of its pages---to the Editors of periodical publications who have favourably marked its progress, and to a numerous list of patrons who have punctually complied with the terms of subscription, and as he trusts, given permanency to the work. The volume for 1832, will be printed on better paper and improved in the typographical execution. It will be continued to the subscribers of the first volume, and should any wish to discontinue the same, they are requested to drop a line to the Publisher or any of his agents, to that effect, before the first of January 1832.

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T. S. Duche pt.

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Bishop of Connecticut and Rhode Island.

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THE YEAR THAT'S GONE!

THUS, through the smiles and favor of a good and gracious Providence, has terminated the second volume of "*The Protestant Episcopal Pulpit, of America;*" and we most respectfully forward an acknowledgment to those Right Reverend Fathers of our Church, and those Professors, and Clergy, who have, in so kind and generous a manner, extended to us the *right hand* of friendship, and thus far in safety, and favor, conducted this *infant* of our Church—and we trust that all those of our Clergy, who have not, as yet, come forward to its aid and its support, will do so at the commencement of the ensuing year, bearing in mind that *this* is the *only* child of *our* Zion that has been "*baptised by this name*"—remembering also, that by its receiving the guardian influence, and protecting care of our Bishops and Clergy, it will, in proper time, gain its due stature of usefulness; and, as it takes its course through distant lands, will redound to the *credit* of our *ministry*, and prove an *honor* to our American Church.

Arrangements have been entered into with the "*Protestant Episcopal Press*" of this city, to carry on the work in future; and, under its *present* guidance, the *first* number of the *next* year will be printed at *that* establishment; and which regulation, we are fully convinced, will meet the satisfaction of Episcopalians generally, and the *decided* approbation of the Church at large.

We are happy to find that our labors have met the patronage of many a pious and generous heart; and that the merits of the work have passed, with honor, the ordeal of a year's scrutiny—that a just tribute of commendation has been awarded to those of our ministry who have generously contributed their discourses, enriched its pages, and thus enhanced the PULPIT'S value—that our untiring, but humble labors, for the respectable appearance it has maintained, have not been in vain—that Fame's expanded wings have wafted a due meed of friendly eulogy from distant lands to ours, and thus rendered the PULPIT a credit to our Church, and bestowed "honor upon those to whom honor was due."

Our friends of the Press will please accept our acknowledg-

ments for the friendly steps they have taken in favor of our work; and the *generous* manner in which they have spoken of its merits, and recommended it to their readers.

We are pleased to find that our PULPIT has been held up to the *Mirror* of public favor, and that credit has thereby been *reflected* upon the work—that it has been protected under the friendly influence of the *Banner of the Church*—we are indebted to the *Episcopal Watchman* for having taken it under its care, and generously *guarded* it through the *past*, as we trust it will through the *coming* year,—we thank the *Messengers*, of the north, the west, and the south, that the PULPIT'S *good name* has been *heralded*, and by them so regularly conveyed to every part of our Union, and through every quarter of our land—the *Intelligencer* and *Soldier* have also guarded it with a brotherly, and a Christian care,—we feel also exceedingly obliged to the *Churchman* of our city, for having extended to us many a generous sentiment and friendly wish—the *Traveller* has also taken it by the hand, and led it on through its annual march. To all other respected editors, who have favorably noticed our progress, we return our cordial thanks, and at the same time assure them that "*they shall in no wise lose their reward;*" may the influence of their pens be ever guided by the "*Spirit of Truth,*" may they "*turn many to righteousness,*" and, we most sincerely and devoutly pray, that a kind Providence may smile upon their exertions and zeal for their reader's benefit, and may their labors be *greatly* and extensively blest; and, in conclusion, we solicit, and trust we shall receive, the friendly countenance, the patronage, and the support of every friend of our *Ministry* and the *Church*—and that success thus crown our labors, and we be enabled to put our ardent desires in execution, by raising, for the services of *the sanctuary*, a pious, and a *fearless* soldier of the Cross. We trust the PULPIT will be hereafter, (as it has been,) *well filled*, and that the publication prove not only creditable to the pens of our ministry, but a blessing may descend upon our Zion—that her stakes be strengthened, her cords extended, and that she be recorded, and considered by the wise and good, THE PRAISE OF THE WHOLE EARTH.

December 31, 1832.

THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL PULPIT.

SERMON BY THE LATE REV. GEORGE GRISWOLD.
SERMON BY THE REV. SAMUEL FULLER, JUN.

VOL. II.] JANUARY, 1832. [NO. I.

ON IDOLATRY:

A Sermon

BY THE LATE REV. GEORGE GRISWOLD,

OF MASSACHUSETTS.

2 St. John, v. 21.—"*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*"

ON the announcement of this text the imaginations of some may take the alarm. What! they may be ready to exclaim, do you propose to warn a Christian assembly against a practice which has never appeared but in those times and places where darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people? Do you suspect any of us to be in danger of falling into idolatry? Yes; the whole tenor of scripture authorises such suspicion; and it may be found, before we have dismissed our subject, that there are some, even in this assembly, who have not altogether kept themselves from idols. It may soon appear that idolatry is not so exclusively the sin of particular nations, and of particular periods, as is sometimes supposed; that it is rather the sin, which most easily besets human nature; and thence that an exhortation to keep themselves from it is always in season to those who inherit that evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living GOD, which his word so fully describes, and which the actual state of the world so completely illustrates. Our general position is this: that the spirit of idolatry may exist in all its malignancy and produce a decided rebellion against the sovereignty of Heaven, even when unaccompanied or uninfluenced by a visible form; and this sentiment it will be my endeavor to enlarge upon, illustrate, and apply to the consciousness of every individual.

Man judgeth after the outward appearance; but GOD, who is a Spirit, judgeth all things; he is a discerner of the intents of the heart, and understandeth our thoughts long before we utter them. His claims on the love and obedience of all his intelligent creatures are absolute: they are like his own nature, eternal and immutable. Wherever this love is withheld, therefore; wherever these claims are practically disavowed,—it matters not what principles are set up in their place, nor on what particular objects they are bestowed,—the high and lofty ONE sees there an abandonment of those laws, which are the main pillars of his stupendous moral fabric; the Allseeing Eye perceives the disruption of those sacred ties which give order and consistency to the remotest provinces of his empire. Every act of rebellion is in his sight the signal of an universal revolt; for he sees in every instance of disobedience, the elements of a disorder which, if the contagion were to spread, and become general throughout his dominion, would strip his intelligent creation of its glory; would counteract the very purpose for which he made the worlds, and reduce all that was beautiful and grand in his sublimer workmanship, back again to the hideousness of chaos. No wonder then that he looks down from that awful throne which is high and lifted up, on every act of wilful disobedience, with displeasure and abhorrence; no wonder that He whose omniscient eye, piercing through that immensity which his presence fills, traces the sinful thing to its remote and unseen consequences, should look upon every transgressor with all the severity of his unbending justice; no wonder that the law should begin to utter its thunders when the sacred majesty of the law is threatened with violation. But oh! it is a wonder that, after the rash deed had been accomplished which brought down the just weight of its anathema on our race, after sentence of death had been pronounced the wages of transgression, GOD should still so love the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed on him might not perish, but have everlasting life. And the greatest wonder is,—after all that has been done by GOD to magnify the law and make it honorable; after all that has been suffered by the son of GOD to bring in an everlasting righteousness; after all the striving of his

Holy Spirit to convince the world of sin and reestablish principles of obedience in the bosoms of an apostate race,—that any of them should yet stand in need of the admonition to keep themselves from idols. It is a fact which fills Heaven with amazement, and Hell with triumph. That principle of alienation from God which began the work of death in the garden of Eden, has spread its contagious influence wherever the human race is found; has run its fatal career through generation after generation, till, notwithstanding what has been done by Him who put forth the might of his omnipotence and travailed in the greatness of his strength to arrest its progress, there is, even in this day of gospel light and glory, among the vast majority of men, an entire alienation of their affections from the supreme and only Potentate. "Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me."

The comprehensive spirit of Christianity teaches us to generalize on moral subjects, and to classify mankind according to their fundamental principles of action. He who looks upon his fellow men with an understanding enlightened by that word which is a discerner of hearts, will recognise in them but a faint likeness to the holy image which that word holds out; he who compares what he sees in the history of human life, with what he reads in the book of revelation, will see very few deeds that might not have been done had that book never been written. So rare, indeed, is the coincidence between the conduct of human affairs and the known will of God, that if the history of this world's doings were spread out in all its details, an overwhelming proportion of its activity would be found to have owed its first impulse to a principle of alienation from the living God, to which the scriptures ascribe the attributes, and on which they bestow the denomination, of downright idolatry.

Still the men of a refined and sensitive age, like the present, may shrink from such a charge as this reasoning would imply: it may not be agreeable to believe that,—after so much light from Heaven has been poured upon our world; after the graven images have been utterly abolished, and the grosser forms of superstition

banished from view; after the condition of society has been so much meliorated, and such wonderful improvements have been made in knowledge and the arts of life; when Christian institutions with all their becoming observances, have supplanted the absurd and degrading rites of Heathenism, and the charms of refinement have thrown their lustre over the whole aspect of civilized men; when, in the words of one who was a better politician than he was a theologian, "Vice has lost half its venom, by losing all its grossness,"—it may not be grateful, I say, to believe after all this progress in refinement and grace, that there should still lie against the majority of our species so fearful a charge as this, in all its depth and dimensions. And if an enlightened Christian observer, looking abroad from his vantage ground on some scene of peculiarly busy speculation, should, like St. Paul at Athens, have his spirit stirred within him at seeing the city wholly given to idolatry, and should, like him, be moved to raise a note of remonstrance so loud as to awaken an interest to know the result of his observations, they would probably be as much astonished at his doctrine as were the refined and philosophical Athenians, and would probably answer, like them, "Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears." It would serve to dispel much of the delusion on which all this surprise and reluctance is founded, could we see as God seeth, with all these external meliorations, how comparatively small has been the moral improvement of our species! Amidst all these surprising movements towards realising the finest conceptions of philosophy, how little advance has been made towards realising the demands of revelation! amidst the thousand *forms* of godliness that prevail around us, how little of its *power* is exerted in the human heart! amidst all the ardor with which the endless varieties of knowledge are pursued, how little is directed to Him, whom to know aright is life eternal! and amidst all this flood of moral and intellectual light, which has been poured from Heaven upon the habitations of men, we might see how this is only a manifold condemnation, because light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light. When God arises to judge the world in righteousness, and makes manifest the secrets of all hearts, every

mouth shall be stopped, and all the world shall become guilty before him.

Whatever the object be, which stands between a man and his Maker, *that* is the object of his idolatry. Whatever principle so effectually exalts itself in his heart, as to withdraw his affections from GOD, and prevent his being brought into subjection to the obedience of CHRIST; whatever closes his soul against the visitations of the HOLY SPIRIT; whatever it be, whether in Heaven above, or on the earth beneath, which exercises that exclusive jurisdiction over his mind, which belongs to the Supreme and only Potentate, that object, or that principle, is an abomination to the LORD his GOD; and until it be utterly abolished and put away, the LORD, as a mighty and strong one, hath precisely the same controversy with that man which he hath with all who have not kept themselves from idols.

It is readily conceded that, in the gradations of society and in its several stages of outward improvement, this principle may be modified to an almost endless extent, but what we would have you bear in mind is, that in the sight of GOD its evil character and pernicious tendency are *always* the same. The idolatry of a refined and intelligent age may assume a different guise from that of a dark and sensual period. In countries blessed with the light of Christianity, men may not fall down to stocks and stones, nor call in the aid of the painter and the statuary to give a sensible image to the object of their adoration, and yet it is possible that the homage paid by them to an abstract sentiment of honor may be as profound, and the sacrifices offered to it may be as bloody, and as abominable in the sight of GOD, as were ever burnt on the altars of the Druids. Parents may not cause their tender offspring to pass through the fire to Moloch, but they may immolate them before the shrine of Fashion, or consecrate them to the cruel and souldestroying service of the god of this world. And while it raises a cry of horror among us, when from the shores of a distant and benighted land tidings are brought to our ears of some bloody massacre at the car of Juggernaut, while the story of a new sacrifice at the shrine of Superstition, wafted to us from some lonely island of the ocean, communicates a thrill of

virtuous resentment through the bosoms of a whole community, it is very possible that, in many bosoms so gracefully and feelingly alive to the degradation of their species, the Allseeing Eye may discern the substantial existence of that very principle which is at the bottom of all this cruelty and abomination. GOD looks at principles; we regard their effects. When the sinful purpose has embodied itself in action; when sin is finished and bringeth forth death; when it confronts us with the ghastly malignity of its essential character; when hatred puts on the guise of murder, and sensuality grovels as beastly drunkenness, *we cannot help* regarding it with unmingled indignation and horror. But to the Omniscient Mind, under all its disguises, and in all its forms, it is only that spirit which *everywhere* worketh in the children of disobedience. Amidst the latency of a disembodied principle it appears to him only as that accursed thing which his soul abhorreth; and he considers that individual in whose bosom it dwells, and whose conduct it rules, just as truly joined to his idols, as if he bowed down every day to a graven image which his own hands had made.

Having thus established our general position, I proceed to illustrate it in a few particulars:

First. Take that class of our fellow creatures, for example, who are lovers of sensual pleasures more than lovers of GOD. Read the history of that man's life who has made pleasure his idol, and sacrificed everything at the shrine of selfish gratifications, who, day after day, has sat down to eat and risen up to play, without ever calling to mind the giver of those blessings of which he was in the habitual enjoyment; who, instead of eating and drinking in order to live, lives only to eat and to drink; who is so completely occupied in his pleasures and his appetites that GOD is not in all his thoughts; who thinks it no profit to pray unto him, and who cares not to serve him; whose glory is in his shame; who minds earthly things, and covets earthly gratifications, and is altogether of the earth, earthly. Peruse the melancholy history of such a life, from beginning to end, and then say what circumstance is wanting to complete that entire alienation of the heart from GOD which he stigmatises as idolatry. How

could the Supreme be more effectually deposed from his throne than he is from that man's affections? How could he possibly pour greater contempt on all the pure commandments of his Maker than by such a life as we have described? Would it in the least heighten his apostacy, or aggravate his forgetfulness of GOD, were he even to personify his pleasures, or to raise a molten image to his lusts, after the most disgusting example of the ancient idolators? Would it, in fact, add to the estrangement of his affections from the most high GOD, were he to perform the orgies, and chant the pæans, and adopt all the folly and all the mockery of the former superstition? Were he actually to *embody* the inward conceptions of his lust, and surround them with all the pomp of an outward and visible adoration, would it alter his intrinsic character in the eyes of Him with whom we have to do? No: if the high consideration and honor which belong to GOD, and to him only, are taken away from him, it matters little whether they are bestowed on the devices of a refined sensualism, or on the grosser objects of Pagan idolatry. The Supreme is, in either case, dethroned from his lawful sovereignty, and another reigns in his stead. His holy law is violently torn from that preeminence which it justly claims, and some other principle made to occupy its place. Whether they are the abstract devices of a corrupt imagination, or the personifications of a beastly sensualism, which are thus exalted in the place of Deity, he cannot but look upon the wretched being, who has given himself up to such a wilful delusion, as plunged in all the guilt, and obnoxious to the punishment of those who do not like to retain GOD in their knowledge.

Second. Again, we read of a coveteousness, which is idolatry. One of the most decided points in the controversy between mankind and their Maker, is respecting the relative value of the goods of this world. His word has stamped them with the impress of an inferior worth, and most emphatically commands us not to set our hearts upon them. While the constant endeavor of mankind is to exalt them into objects of preeminent importance; to attach to them an inordinate value, and bestow upon the attainment of them their most zealous and persevering labor. Now, of all the

forms of idolatry, as this is the most common, so it is the least excusable. "The covetous man," says an able writer, "is not like the sensualist, goaded on by the power of native appetite, but by the force of a habit which he has himself created. Instead of embarking in the heat of passion, he sits down with all the calmness of calculating principle; he consecrates the best powers of his mind, the noblest faculties of his soul, and the warmest affections of his heart, to the great object of a fortune in this world; he makes the acquirement of gain the settled aim, and the prosecution of that aim the settled habit of his existence. With the wealth he has gotten by his own hands, does he feel himself as independent of GOD as the Pagan does, who, happy in the fancied protection of an image made with his own hand, suffers no disturbance to his quiet from any thought of the real, but the unknown Deity. Baal and Moloch were not more substantially the gods of rebellious Israel, than Mammon is the god of his affections." Nor would it in the least aggravate his forgetfulness of GOD, if the fortune which is first in his thoughts, and uppermost in his desires, were represented by a visible image and enshrined on a pedestal, around which he might assemble his household, and make it the object of their morning and evening devotions. It is thus, my brethren, that GOD may discover the essentials of idolatry amongst the men of a refined and enlightened period; thus may he maintain the charge against us, after the visible tokens of it have been abolished, and the material images of it have been overthrown. No wonder, then, that He who cannot be mocked by a vain show of lip service, while the heart is given to another, should so affectionately warn his children to flee from covetousness; no wonder that He who will not give his glory to another, should direct the exhortation of our text to every kindred and tongue and people, and wherever his name is heard, or his word is read, among the populations of earth, that he should solemnly admonish them, by his apostle, *to keep themselves from idols.*

Third. Again, let us consider the case of some who have exalted *themselves* into the place of the Deity. That mysterious and incomprehensible being called "*self*," fixing the strong founda-

tions of its empire in the pride of the human heart, rules over the lives and destinies of men with despotic sway. It exhibits an hundred shapes, and has an almost endless multiplicity of operations, but is at bottom the same principle of corrupt and selfish pride. In one it is the pride of opinion, in another the pride of learning, in another the pride wealth, in another the pride of station, in another the pride of fashion, and in another the pride of personal accomplishment, which seduce their affections away from Him, who is chiefest among ten thousands. Their hearts are as truly devoted to the service of another, distinct and separate from the God of Heaven, as if the invisible idol which they worship were wrought into one great collossal statue, whose head should reach the heavens, and he should stand one foot upon the earth, and the other upon the sea, and call upon all nations to bow down and do him homage. Among this crowd of worshippers, we will single out as the subject of our last illustration,

Fourth. The man who has enthroned his own intellect in the place of God. We have already defined idolatry to be the substitution of some other principle for obedience to the Supreme Lawgiver. And I apprehend the whole extent of the definition may be realized in the case of him who follows the devices of his own heart, the deductions of his own reason, or the lifting up of his own imagination, as well as of him who has "made gold his hope, and said, to the fine gold, thou art my confidence." There are those who have set themselves down to the acquisition of knowledge precisely as the covetous man to heaping up treasure, and labored as earnestly at the post of their ardent and unremitting exertions; who have contemplated their increasing stock of literature, with the eye of selfcomplacency, which the other casts upon his glittering hoards; and have allowed their intellectual gains and their growing reputation to separate just as effectually between them and God, as do the treasures of the most hardened votary of Mammon. Although there seems but little danger at present of this form of idolatry becoming universal, from the general reluctance of our species to cultivate their intellectual powers, still wherever its dominion is once established over the human mind, so deeply are its foundations laid in the nature of man; so consonant is the exertion of

the intellect to the true purpose of our existence; so specious and seductive are its reasonsings, and so grateful the incense it ministers to personal vanity, that its strong holds are impregnable to every weapon but that invincible word, which is mighty through God to the casting down of imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the jurisdiction of the Supreme. Idolatry, under all its modifications, consists in worshipping the creature more than the Creator; and if there be an instance which he regards with most peculiar abhorrence, it must be where those very Godlike powers of reason and intelligence, which he has bestowed to conduct us to himself, are basely perverted for the purpose of alienating us from him—are made to conspire in banishing him from his lawful dominions; where those rational and immortal faculties, which were given that we might know Him the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, are leagued together in the act of disowning and rebelling against him!—But, on the other hand, if there be on this earth one sight more lovely than the rest, and one over which superior beings might pause, and contemplate with satisfaction, it is that man, endowed with rare genius and of exalted attainments, who has consecrated his powers, and subordinated his attainments; who has cast down his imaginations and submitted his desires, and counted them but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; who, not ashamed of the gospel, nor stumbling at the humiliation of the cross, has applied himself to the record which God gave of his Son, and devoted to the work the powers of his comprehensive mind, with all the patience, docility, and submission of a little child; and thus shown himself to be one of the blessed number who have kept themselves from idols, and of whom it is written that, *of such* is the kingdom of Heaven.

Having now, beloved friends, unfolded and illustrated the doctrine of our text, the application of it must devolve chiefly upon your own consciences. Every individual best knows what objects they are which have wound their insidious way into the deep recesses of his soul, and seduced it from allegiance to its Maker. Every individual knows what principle is exalted into the highest place of his affections, and claims the jurisdiction of supreme

lawgiver. Those objects, and those principles, are the main points in the controversy, that is now pending between you and your Maker. By virtue of his relation as your creator and preserver, He claims the absolute possession of your heart; He demands the first and most devoted homage of your rational powers; He insists that his will shall be the rule of your actions, and his word the guide of your life; and if you have hitherto permitted any created thing to occupy the place of preeminence which belongs to Him, he now most affectionately and most solemnly enjoins upon you to put it away.

We recoil from an open idolator, as from one whose breath is pestilential; as from one who is smitten with a judicial curse; and when we read the history of the dark ages of the world, when men bowed themselves down before the dumb idols which their own hands had made, our hearts rise indignant at the shameful prostration of human reason; when we hear accounts from those dark places of the earth, which are even now filled with the habitations of cruelty, all the better feelings of our souls are stirred with emotion at the bloody sway which Superstition wields over apostate man. But take the principle now developed, home to your *own bosoms*, let this candle of the LORD search the deep places of your souls and bring to light the hidden causes which have withdrawn your allegiance from the living GOD, then let him who is without sin among us cast the first stone at the benighted inhabitants of India. Happy is the man who can sincerely lay his hand upon his heart and say there is nothing which stands between it and his Maker. Blessed is the man who *has kept himself from idols.* That this blessing may be ours, GOD mercifully grant through JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

DEATH PREFERABLE TO LIFE:

A Sermon

BY THE REV. SAMUEL FULLER, JUN.,

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Job vii. 16.—"*I would not live alway.*"

THERE are few stronger principles in the human breast than the love of life. The desire of selfpreservation is instinctive, and operates long before reason dawns, or experience attaches us to the pleasures of existence. As it precedes the exercise of natural affection, so it is sometimes found to overcome and outlive the kind and social feelings of the soul. How strong and lasting in its nature, and how tender and constant in its exercise, is maternal affection! Time or distance will not weaken it, nor the ingratitude or misconduct of its beloved object destroy its attachment; and yet it can be extinguished by the stronger instinct, the desire of selfpreservation. It would be incredible, were it not a recorded truth of history, that a famishing mother would appease her hunger with the flesh of her own children. The melancholy record proves that of all natural principles none is more powerful than the innate love of life.

Nor are men attached to life merely by the principle of instinct. "I could willingly die," said an expiring Christian, "were there not friends, to whom it is hard to say *farewell.*" Life is made pleasant, and attachment to it is strengthened, by friendship and the social relations. Confirmed habits of honorable and useful employment, the prospect of doing good, and the apparent and real dependence of others upon them, may make men loth to die.

And then our fears have exhibited death with terrific aspect, and surrounded it with horrid drapery. The coffin, the shroud, the darkness and dampness, the silence and coldness of the grave, the worm and the corruption, and the untried and eternal state into which death introduces the soul, are circumstances calculated to make the stoutest heart recoil, and cling with closest grasp upon

its hold of life. But these attachments and apprehensions are incident to our frailty. Through the grace of GOD, they may be overcome and renounced. The *believer in* CHRIST can say, *I would not live alway.*

There is the greatest wisdom in his choice, since should he live alway, THE EVILS OF THE PRESENT LIFE WOULD BE PROLONGED AND PERPETUATED; AND

HIMSELF DEBARRED FROM THE JOYS OF HEAVEN.

I WOULD NOT LIVE ALWAY, *can the Christian say, to endure forever the evils of life. I would not live alway,* exposed to the evils incident to this mortal body—under the continual infliction of GOD'S original curse upon man, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread:" or perpetually exposed to the ravages of the "pestilence that walketh in darkness," and to the violence of the "sickness that wasteth at noonday:"—to be forever a partaker of that nature whose beauty is a "fading flower,"—whose "strength" is "labor and sorrow,"—whose eyes fail through dimness, and whose ears grow dull of hearing, and whose head totters with infirmity, and whitens with the frosts of age,—whose limbs are scorched with fever, and racked with pain, and then chilled with ague, and shaken with anguish,—to be frozen by the severity of winter and burn by the fervor of summer,—to inhale sickness from the wind, and disease from the tempest,—to be forever the child of misfortune, and the victim of adversity.

I WOULD NOT LIVE ALWAY, *the subject of mental infirmity.* What ignorance beclouds the mind of wretched man! How much carefulness and painstaking must be expended, before he can be taught things the most necessary to be known! How much dulness must be quickened, and obstinacy overcome, and disinclination removed, before he can be successfully instructed! And provided disposition and industry keep pace with opportunity and duty, what is the perfection of his knowledge but the discovery of his ignorance? After his most careful investigations, and his profoundest researches, Forgetfulness, with a besom of destruction, soon sweeps o'er memory's tablet, and obliterates his choicest lessons of wisdom. His most highly cultivated faculties sink into imbecility, and his mind into the dotage of age. How often is his judgment, even in its most vigorous exercise, erring and im-

perfect! Frequent are his mistakes, and erroneous his conclusions, even in affairs of the utmost importance, and which intimately concern his own welfare. Imperfect man errs, even when the error produces his ruin; and mistakes, even when the mistake is the sacrifice of his happiness.

I WOULD NOT LIVE ALWAY, *in the midst of a selfish and malignant world*,—where my conduct is misrepresented, my motives misunderstood, my character assailed, and my best interests injured and obstructed,—where Envy displays her malignant features, and Detraction employs her envenomed tongue to destroy my reputation,— where Jealousy invents, and Malice contrives, their cruel purposes to disturb my peace.

I WOULD NOT LIVE ALWAY, *the witness, as well as the subject of human miseries.* It is painful to the benevolent heart to witness the misfortunes and follies of men. It is painful to see infancy and innocence suffering pain and sickness—to see them cut off just as life begins to open, and deposited in the cold sepulchre. It is painful to see youth and loveliness, gradually sinking under the dominion of disease; to see the bright eyes grow dim, and the cheeks of health become pale. It is painful to "discern, among the youths, a young man void of understanding," wasting his patrimony in extravagance and dissipation; degrading the noble faculties of body and mind, with which GOD has endowed him; and descending prematurely down to the grave, and to the shades of eternal death, the victim of accursed intemperance. It is painful to witness the ravings of lunacy, and the frenzy of the maniac; to see the mind, the noblest work of GOD, in ruins; its intricate and mysterious mechanism disordered, and its harmony and balance destroyed. It is painful to see the impenitent and prayerless sinner, careless of his rebellion, and thoughtless of his danger, sporting with the menaces of JEHOVAH, and mocking at the threatenings of the ALMIGHTY, and yet to know that between him and eternal burnings there only intervenes,—what is liable to be sundered at any moment,—the thin fragile veil of flesh.

Well may the Christian, the witness of such spectacles, and himself the *servant of unholy passions*, declare, I WOULD NOT LIVE ALWAY. When his faith is firm, doubts and obscurities will sometimes arise and weaken it. When his hopes are bright, sin

and impenitence will obscure and darken them. When his love to GOD and men is fervent, unholy feelings will spring up, and dampen and allay it. When the Sun of Righteousness shines upon him, his iniquities will often arise like a thick cloud, envelope him in spiritual darkness, and leave him in mental misery.

I WOULD NOT LIVE ALWAY, *exposed to temptations and enticements to sin.* The alluring example of men whom, for some good qualities, the Christian has been taught to respect, will offer its persuasions to divert him from the path of life. He will be in danger of being corrupted from "the simplicity in Christ," by pernicious doctrines, bearing the semblance of truth, and recommended by all that can give weight to human authority, or respectability to human character. Learning, and intelligence, and wit, and persuasion, will be employed by those, who in appearance are angels of light, to weaken his allegiance to his crucified Master.

Himself the subject and witness of misery and sin, the Christian will say, I WOULD NOT LIVE ALWAY, especially since GOD *has otherwise determined.* His daily prayer will be, "My Father, who art in Heaven, thy will be done;" and acquiescence in the will of GOD, will constitute the perfection of his religious character. He will therefore desire to depart from this wretched life, knowing that GOD has prepared some better thing for him than its miseries; and that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the imagination of man, the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love him.

There is wisdom in the Chsistian's choice, for, should his life not terminate, HE WOULD NOT BE ADMITTED INTO THE JOYS OF HEAVEN.

His corruptible body would not then put on incorruption, nor his mortal, immortality. Of the appearance of CHRIST'S glorious body, in the likeness of which the bodies of all the faithful are to be hereafter fashioned, but a brief account is given in the sacred Scriptures; sufficient, however, to convince us, since the future bodies of the saints are to be like that of CHRIST, that our most vivid and exalted conceptions of this world's splendor, fall infinitely short of the glory which shall be revealed in them. What earthly grandeur and majesty ever equalled the transfiguration of

CHRIST, when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. It is not then the language of figure but of fact, which Christians will realize, if they are *faithful* members of CHRIST's mystical body, when it is said, "The righteous shall shine forth as the sun; they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever." The Savior said that the children of the resurrection will be equal to the angels, and therefore will resemble angels in their glory and beauty. Like the angels, they will be endowed with youth and unabated activity; eternal youth, and perpetual vigor, experiencing neither weariness or decay. Who then would not join the Christian in his joyful exclamation, *I would not live alway*, since, by dying, he will resemble the sun in splendor, and flourish like angels in immortal youth?

In Heaven, the faculties of the mind, as well as those of the body, will in a wonderful measure be strengthened and perfected. If this vile body, the subject of infirmity and disease, and which is soon to be mingled with the dust, is to be reanimated and restored to more than pristine dignity and excellence,—is to shine as the light, and to be like the ascended body of the King of Glory,—how much higher improvement and elevation are to be received and attained by the mind? If the inferior obtains such honor, what must that be which will be conferred upon the superior part of man? Advanced to a world where error is never known, and where truth, eternal and unvarying, is ever presented to the attention, the judgment will never mistake, nor lead astray. The memory, perfected and made retentive, will preserve whatever is committed to its trust. The understanding, thus aided by the other mental powers, redeemed and invigorated, will be making perpetual advances in knowledge. For not only will the faculties of the mind be improved, but the field of investigation will be proportionably enlarged. The scene of observation and improvement will not be this little earth, and its limited productions, but the wonders and glories of the celestial regions. *I would not live alway*, in prospect of such an increase of knowledge and intelligence, the perpetual subject of mental imperfection, of ignorance and weakness. There are mysteries in Providence, in nature, and in redemption, which will in Heaven be explained. I

would then rather depart thither, where I shall know, even also as I am known.

I WOULD NOT LIVE ALWAY, *away from my home.* How many pleasing associations, and tender recollections, are awakened by the mention of home. Around what place do the affections linger with such strong attachment, or what spot looks bright and happy, when the rest of the world appears dark and cheerless, but that characterized by the expressive word home? Where do the skies wear a peculiar brightness, and Nature present peculiar cheerfulness and loveliness, but at home?

Home is a place of *friendship.* There the youthful affections are first called into exercise, and the kindness with which they are reciprocated, awakens attachments that will long be cherished and perpetuated.

It is a place of *security.* Living in friendship, the inmates of home are secure from the mutual attacks of slander and misrepresentation. It is secure from that false invective, which embitters so much of the intercourse with a censorious and misjudging world.

It is a place of *confidence.* Bound together by common interests, and secure of each other's friendship, among the inmates of home, what room can there be for distrust?

It is a place of *peace.* Where Affection presides, Peace is her certain attendant, and will make home,

The place of *happiness.* That place cannot be miserable, where friendship, security, confidence, and peace are found to dwell.

The mention of home will awaken the recollection of the honored father, who counselled and supported; of the kind mother, who consoled and cherished; and of the society and sweet converse of brothers and sisters.

But Heaven is the Christian's home. Here, he is a stranger and a sojourner; but he is travelling to a city which hath foundations, the abode of friendship and peace. *Divine love* is the sacred principle that animates all hearts in the regions of bliss, from the "rapt seraph" to him who has "washed his robes in the blood of the Lamb." It unites the inhabitants of Heaven in an indissoluble bond of harmony, and attaches them to GOD himself.

Security also is there. Security from the influence of unholy

affections. Into Heaven, sinful passions, which here make the human bosom the abode of wretchedness, can never intrude. There will be security from the temptations and hostility of wicked men, and from the enmity and malice of the great spiritual foe. With the Prince of Peace, *peace* shall ever reign, and from the right hand of GOD shall flow the river of his *pleasures* forevermore.

I would not live alway separated from my pious friends, in whose sacred society, and holy friendship, I found such delight and profit, but who have preceded me in their entrance into glory. For in Heaven the pious friendships of this world shall be renewed and perpetuated. Children will be restored to their parents, and parents will again rejoice in the presence and esteem of their children. Ah, how fully will the pious mother be rewarded for all her prayerful watchings, and kind assiduities, and untiring solicitude, when, in the world of light and glory, she shall find that, of the children GOD has given her, not one is lost, but each one is there, with the crown of life upon his head, the palm of victory in his hand, and in his mouth the new song of salvation!

In Heaven will be enjoyed the society of the pious and holy of all ages—of Adam, the first and great father of the human family; of Noah, the progenitor of a new world; of Abraham, the founder of the Jewish people, and the father of the faithful of all nations; of Moses, who talked with GOD, face to face; of David, the sweet singer of Israel; of a host of prophets and apostles, of whom were we to speak, time would fail us; of Paul, who labored in the cause of his Master, more abundantly than all others, and who now wears a richer crown; of those holy martyrs of the primitive church; of that multitude of Christian worthies, of whom the world was not worthy; of the heroic reformers from the corruptions of popery, who counted not their lives dear to themselves; of the devoted modern missionaries of the cross, who have given an example of apostolic zeal and heroism; of Brainard, the early apostle to the neglected and abusedaborigines of this country; and of Martyn and Heber, names which will long be embalmed in the endeared recollection of Christians. And could the Heavens be spread, and our faith be lost in sight, we should see them clothed in robes of light, and hear them, with hearts of love, and tongues of fire, singing hallelujah, hallelujah to the Lamb.

I would not live alway, for in the midst of that holy brotherhood is JESUS CHRIST, their elder brother, the faithful and true witness; that JESUS, the desire and Savior of all nations; and whom I desire to see; my Savior! to whom, I have so often prayed, and in whom I have so long trusted; Him who has for years been my invisible teacher and defence, and whom, though not seeing, yet have I loved!

With what profit and pleasure do I read the words of CHRIST, as recorded by his apostles; much greater would have been my satisfaction to have heard, like his personal followers, his instructive conversations, and to have sat at his sacred feet, like the attentive and commended Mary. What then will be the enraptured delight, and holy ecstacy, conferred by his presence and fellowship in Heaven?

Is there a glorious company of apostles now praising GOD, and would I live alway, in this state of misery, and be excluded from their society? Is there a noble army of martyrs now surrounding the Father of Spirits, and would I live alway, and be prevented from joining their song of adoration? Is there a goodly fellowship of prophets, arrayed in white, and now praising GOD, and would I live alway, and exclude myself from their blissful employment? Are there the redeemed of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, around the throne of GOD, enjoying the felicity of his immediate presence, and increasing in knowledge and happiness —and would I live alway in ignorance and wretchedness? And could those redeemed ones answer us from the thrones of their glory, would they say, "We would have lived alway?" Can children desire to remain away from their home,—or pilgrims from their own country,—or travellers from the end of their journey,—or citizens from their citizenship,—or heirs from their heritage? No!—*I would not live alway*, since to die is such gain; and in prospect of the glory to be so soon revealed, my heart exclaims, *Come quickly, even so come*, LORD JESUS!

CHRISTIANS,—you, who are renewed in heart and life, who are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and who are now led by the Spirit,—ye shall not live alway. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD shall deliver him out of them all. Ye shall not live alway, groaning in this earthly tabernacle, but

ye shall soon be clothed upon, with your house from Heaven. Look at the sun, as he goes forth in his strength—thus shall ye soon shine forth in glory and immortality. Look at the stars, as at night they beautify the heavens—thus shall ye soon shine forever and ever. Ye shall not alway be the subjects of mental weakness and error, for ye shall soon be like the angels. Ye shall not alway be the servants of sin, since ye shall soon enter into rest, and cease from sin. Ye shall not alway be the witnesses, as well as the subjects of human wretchedness, for ye shall arrive at those regions, where there is neither pain, nor crying, nor death. Ye shall not alway be absent from your home, but shall go to JESUS CHRIST, and to his Father, and your Father; to his GOD, and your GOD. Instead of the thorny path of this life, your feet shall soon tread the golden streets of the Holy City; and instead of lamentation and complaint, your mouths shall soon be filled with the song of Moses and the Lamb.

MY BRETHREN: You cannot live alway; though the impenitent and worldly will say, "We would live alway. Give us enough of this world, and we wish for none better. Give us the riches and honors and pleasures of the world, and we should never wish to die." But what would you be profitted, should you gain the whole world, and lose your own souls? It is appointed unto men to die. What do the vacant seat at the fireside, and the added stone at the burial place, teach, but that death is in every family? It is appointed unto men to die. You may banish the thought from your minds, and yet you must die. You may live in impenitence and opposition to GOD, and yet you must die. You may live in the neglect of prayer, and the word of GOD, and make no preparation for the awful reality, and yet you must die. It is appointed unto men to die. But after death the judgment. As death leaves you, so will the judgment find you. There is no repentance, nor faith, nor hope, in the grave to which you are hastening. Death, judgment—eternity—heaven—hell—happiness,—misery of a soul that can never die,—are tremendous realities. May GOD write the important lesson they should teach, upon the hearts of us all, and prepare us for our great change, through his infinite mercy in CHRIST JESUS our LORD. Amen.

THE

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SERMON BY THE RT. REV. BENJAMIN T. ONDERDONK, D. D.

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CHRISTIAN SIMPLICITY:

A Sermon

BY THE RT. REV. BENJAMIN T. ONDERDONK, D. D.

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK.

2 Corinthians, xi. 3.—"*I fear lest, by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in* CHRIST."

THE apostle is putting his Corinthian brethren on their guard against the arts of false teachers, who, by extraordinary pretensions to piety and zeal, endeavored to underrate *his* services, and give currency to the erroneous systems which they would substitute for the pure religion of the gospel. He compares their arts to the "subtlety" of "the serpent," when he "beguiled Eve;" evidently intimating that the effects they would produce may not improperly be compared to the tremendous consequences flowing from that first deception. Filled with alarm at the prospect of the spiritual and eternal evils that must be consequent on departure from the pure religion of JESUS, he conjures them to "bear with" him, if, in the exercise of that zealous concern which these imposters had wickedly termed "folly," he manifested "over" them a "godly jealousy," because, through his ministry, they had been brought into covenant relation to the Redeemer; and expresses his lively and affectionate solicitude, "lest, by any means," through these false teachers, their "minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in CHRIST"—the artlessness, humility, and sincerity, so conspicuous in his religion.

Exactly in what the errors of these false teachers consisted, we are not informed. Their system, however, appears to have em-

braced extravagant pretensions to piety, the confident denouncing of others as destitute of it, and affectation of peculiar zeal, labor, and industry, in which they did not scruple to build unjust reputation on foundations laid by others. They appear to have been characterised by a spirit of detraction, and a disposition, not only to deny the merits of others, but to accuse them falsely. Serious corruptions of the Christian doctrine appear to have been propagated by them. And indeed, so great was their defection "from the simplicity that is in CHRIST," that the apostle considered all their pretensions like Satan assuming the form of an angel of light.

However peculiar were the circumstances immediately calling forth the apostolical epistles, every part of them is fraught with matter of interesting and edifying reflection, suited to all times, places, and persons. Although the false teachers, who were the immediate cause of the kind anxiety expressed in the text, have, long since, been called to their great account; yet the Church has never been, and surely is not now, without similar enemies. From a vast variety of sources, there is perpetual danger of our being "corrupted from the simplicity that is in CHRIST." To guard against this is a duty enforced by all the solicitude that we should feel to enjoy the spiritual and eternal blessings designed by our holy religion. Let us, then, as an incitement to this duty, consider the nature and practical effects of the "simplicity that is in CHRIST."

This virtue may be considered as comprising humility, artlessness, and sincerity.

But its nature will be best understood by a reference to its effects. Let us consider these in their bearing on our DUTY TO GOD, our DUTY TO OUR FELLOW MEN, and our PERSONAL CHARACTERS.

The simplicity that is in CHRIST should influence our duty to GOD, in the *sentiments that we entertain of Him, and in the service which we render Him.*

Humble dependents upon our Creator; weak, but in His strength; ignorant, but by His teaching; lost, but by His saving grace; finite, while He is infinite; frail, while He is unerring; depraved, while He is perfectly holy; on earth, while He is in

Heaven; our knowledge of Him can be that only which He is pleased to reveal. And the view thus afforded of His nature, attributes, and will, and of His dispensations towards our race, should be embraced by us with humility and sincerity of heart. Satisfied that what claims to be a revelation from Him is proved such by the strongest and most conclusive evidence, we should look to it with the single motive of discovering and embracing the truths which it imparts. Sensible that a revelation of the nature, attributes, will, and acts, of an Infinite Being must be expected to contain much above our comprehension, we should, so far from rejecting the mysteries which it contains, or questioning its genuineness on account of those mysteries, regard them as strong collateral evidence that it is from GOD. For it is clear to a reasonable and unprejudiced mind, that in instructions on the nature, attributes, and acts of GOD, there must be expected to be found truths beyond the powers of human comprehension, and to be admitted simply on the ground of authority; even as, in philosophy, there are many truths incomprehensible to ordinary minds, the rejection of which, however, would be the heighth of unreasonableness and absurdity; and even as the strongest and best tutored minds, in their philosophical and metaphysical researches, often find all efforts at the full comprehension and elucidation of truths, whose existence is clear as day, totally baffled, and made to stop at that important point of attainment in knowledge, deep conviction of the ignorance of man, and the infinite intelligence of the Deity.

Casting down, then, all vain imaginations, and utterly renouncing all theories built on supposed natural apprehensions of the Great Supreme, the simplicity that is in CHRIST will lead us to the pages of revelation for our only ideas of the nature, attributes, acts, and will of GOD. Whatever is there clearly revealed is conscientiously adopted. Efforts to set aside, or fully elucidate, what is incomprehensible, are checked by the rational conviction that, on such subjects, there must be expected to be secret things belonging to the LORD our GOD, as well as those things which are revealed for us. Facts and doctrines constitute the latter; the perfect knowledge and full comprehension of all points connected with them, are included in the former.

Thus, in opposition to the pride of human systems, in disregard of the difficulties raised by weak but presumptuous human intellect, indifferent to the credit of originality in theory, and decidedly hostile to the daring spirit of metaphysical explanation of what the Scripture has left in mystery, the simplicity that is in CHRIST leads to GOD as alone able to impart the knowledge of Himself, and humbly receives all that he reveals, knowing that it, therefore, must be true, and consicous that man can, as yet, but know in part.

Beware, brethren, "lest, by any means, your minds should be corrupted from" this "simplicity that is in CHRIST." A bold and daring spirit is abroad in the world, which, in disregard of the pure principles that united the Christians of the first and best days of the Gospel, in *one faith*, and that the faith, in its simplicity and integrity, of Holy Writ, never wearies in its unhallowed surmisings of what *ought to be* GOD'S truth, or in its presumptuous experiments of the forms into which the contents of the sacred pages can be tortured. The only effectual remedy of this extensively mischievous, and it is to be feared, growing evil, is to go back to the simplicity of those primitive times, when Christians were of one mind and one heart, when faith was drawn from the pure word of GOD, and the divinely constituted mode of preserving and defending it, by the ministry, sacraments, and services of the Church, prevailed through the *one body* of the followers of the Redeemer, and maintained among them unity of spirit, and the bond of peace. Be it your effort, brethren, to preserve, by the same means, the same evangelical character. Amid the jarring opinions with which the pride of man has adulterated the pure word of GOD, ask for the old paths, the primitive doctrine, in the certainty that therein you will find the true intent of the Great Inspirer of all religious truth; cheerfully sacrifice to this object all prejudices excited by human teaching, and modern pretensions to improvement upon the earliest received system of the Gospel; for that system must necessarily be the purest, and the most genuine. In the exercise of this simplicity which is in CHRIST, receive with meekness the ingrafted word; and for any difficulties which you may find therein, wait for the great change, which will remove

you from seeing as through a glass, darkly, to seeing face to face, and from knowing in part, to knowing even as also you are known.

In *the service which we render to* GOD, the simplicity that is in CHRIST should confine us to a single view to His glory, and our spiritual and eternal good. He sees the heart, and if there is, in that service, any low or selfish motive, or the least disposition bordering on display, vanity, or pride, it is abomination in His sight.

There are feelings of self-complacency; there is an idea of great merit in our services; there is a fond conceit of being peculiarly the favorites of Heaven, a presumptuous confidence of having been eternally designated, and by a perpetual miracle, preserved, as a chosen object of divine regard; there is an assurance of being removed from all danger of falling from grace; there arises, from one or other of these causes, a comparison, most favorable to ourselves, of our attainments and privileges with those of others—a feeling of conscious superiority that we would fain persuade ourselves is a due appreciation of the divine favor, or Christian pity for the less blessed state of others; there is a fondness for the praise of men; there is a vain exhibition of fancied gifts; there are these affections of the carnal mind, with which the simplicity that is in CHRIST is totally inconsistent. For vanity of one's own advantages, pride in imagined superiority, or love of the applause of fellow worms, to come in competition with the service of the Great GOD, is a profanation that must be most displeasing in His sight.

Cultivate, brethren, the simplicity that is in CHRIST, whereby, in the pureness of your offerings, and the humility and sincerity of heart with which they are made, you may serve GOD truly, both in will and deed. The offering should be not only sacrifices of prayer and praise, but the continued and consistent devotion of your lives to all the duties of piety and morality. Beware "lest your minds be corrupted" to the mingling with this of any offering to their own vanity or pride, to self-interest, or to the applause of men. Simple is the offering which GOD requires, and single the view with which He would have it made. Thus be it rendered.

It will be accepted through the meritsof your Intercessor ; and its recompense will remain forever, when the selfinterested Christian *will have had his reward.*

The simplicity that is in CHRIST should also influence our *duty to our fellow men.*

It is opposed to the ten thousand artifices which the world suggests for the promotion of our interests in life ; to the equivocation and dissimulation, so hostile to confidence among men ; and to the pride and vain glory which mar social happiness, and inflict so many unmerited pangs.

Unfortunately, there is hardly a calling in life which does not present temptation to promote selfish ends by disingenuous artifices, often designedly kept as secrets of the craft. But even if these arts succeed, and those who practise them are prepared to enjoy their fruits, let them remember that for all these things GOD will bring them into judgment. And are they consistent with strict honesty ? Is there integrity in any measure which has a tendency to conceal the real quality by false appearances, and unjustifiable recommendations ? Depend upon it, brethren, every system of dealing which is not perfectly open and frank, which takes advantage of ignorance, or which fails in a candid exhibition of the *whole truth* respecting the matter in hand, is inconsistent with the simplicity that is in CHRIST, and can stand excused neither at the bar of strict honesty and integrity, nor at the final scrutiny of the intents and purposes of the heart. The world, either in ignorance, or in its perverted system of morals, may be silent, and even commend ; but all who practise such dealings must stand, at the impartial tribunal of the last judgment, convicted of dishonesty and falsehood, and take the portion of the disciples of the great author and abettor of deception.

There is another very prevalent and awfully guilty departure from the simplicity that is in CHRIST—*deceitfulness in speech ;* letting our yea be otherwise than yea, and our nay than nay. Speech is the gift of GOD, designed to promote His glory, and the good of men. The sin of lying, in all its forms and modifications, and with all the extenuations that the wit of man, the promptings of worldly interest, the customs of society, or the fear of

consequences, can throw around it, stands confest an impious perversion of this noble gift, to the dishonor of the Great Giver, the undermining of confidence among men, and the degradation of the human character. For this complication of guilt, an awful condemnation is revealed from Heaven. It may now be unheeded; the ear may be deaf to it; the trifling and unthinking mind may not stop to regard it; the hardened heart may mock at it; yet liars will find their portion with him, one of the worst representations of whose character, given in Holy Writ, is, that he is a liar, and the father of lies.

In the simplicity that is in CHRIST, brethren, avoid this guilt, and escape this awful danger. Let your yea be yea, and your nay nay. No interest to be answered by equivocation and falsehood is a counterbalance to its iniquity. No present relief it may afford is to be compared with the sweet consciousness of having held fast your integrity. No gloss of custom can make that true which, in its very terms, is false, or separate from it the degrading character, and the threatened recompense, of lying.

Grossly inconsistent, too, with the simplicity that is in CHRIST, are vanity and pride in intercourse with fellow men. Whether these appear as ambition, aspiring to be great at the expense of the happiness of others; as spiritual pride, puffed up with the idea of superior holiness, and manifested by supercilious deportment, an uncharitable tongue, and unkind tempers and dispositions; as self-elation, quick in apprehending injury or insult, and inexorable in demand for vengeance; as vain confidence in intellectual or spiritual superiority, impatient of denial, overbearing in the advancement of opinion, or unjust or unkind towards the sentiments of others; as pride of birth, wealth, station, or person; as insensibility to the privations and miseries of others; in whatever shape they appear, they are hostile to the spirit of our holy religion. Let Christians beware of their corrupting influence. Ministering here either perpetual uneasiness, or a species of joy and satisfaction unworthy of an intelligent being, they cannot but be highly offensive to GOD, and exposed to the severity of His just indignation.

Lastly, in our *personal characters*, the simplicity that is in CHRIST should conspicuously appear.

And this will naturally be the case, if we imbibe the spirit connected with the particulars of the virtue already considered. They will lead to that humility, artlessness, and sincerity, which will throw over the whole character purity, loveliness, and attraction. Mildness and gentleness, will take possession of the heart, and influence the life. Conscious integrity, and singleness of purpose, will preserve the mind from the degrading, self-tormenting, and extensively unhappy influence of a jealous and suspicious temper. Moderation, temperance, and gratitude, will impart to the gifts of Heaven their highest enjoyment. Covetousness, ostentation, and extravagance, will give place to Christian feelings of stewardship in the possession of the gifts of Providence, for the good of others, and the glory of the Giver. The miseries of selfishness will be lost in the delights of fidelity in social duty; and the high head, the affected look, and the sullen temper, of spiritual pride, be exchanged for the meekness, kindness, and cheerfulness of the Gospel.

Cultivate, my brethren, this simplicity that is in CHRIST. Take heed lest your minds be corrupted from it. The pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and the love of the applause of men, are its active enemies. Be true, then, to the conditions of your covenant in CHRIST, and renounce them. Strive to be preserved from their influence, that you may possess and manifest the pure, holy, humble, and ingenuous character of the followers of the Lamb.

Thus, in reference to GOD, your fellow men, and yourselves, you are to preserve the simplicity that is in CHRIST. It is a heavenly virtue, for the possession of which, you should seek divine grace, with a diligence and sincerity proportioned to its infinite importance.

No means, accompanying your prayers, can be more promising of success than diligent and careful study of the character of our blessed LORD, and of his first disciples, as given in the inspired pages, and in the records and remains of primitive Christian antiquity. To the religion of that period, when frequent and cruel persecution had a powerful tendency to check insincere professions, and preserve purity of faith, piety, and morals, and the immediate influence of the personal ministry of CHRIST and his apostles yet

shed its blessings on the church, we may safely look for the doctrine and practice which constitute the true simplicity that is in CHRIST. The nearer we conform to them, the less shall we be in danger of being corrupted from that simplicity. The best prayer that we can offer for ourselves, for society, and for the church, is, that the spirit of those times may be revived among us; and upon the principles then prevalent, all Christians be united in one body; and as then, be distinguished from the world, not only by profession, but in life and conversation.

JESUS CHRIST THE ONLY SOURCE OF REST AND HAPPINESS:

A Sermon

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John, vi. 68.—"*Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*"

THE discourse of our LORD, recorded in this chapter, unfolds many of the most essential truths of his gospel. The words which dropped from his blessed lips on this occasion were indeed spirit and life. Speaking with great authority and intelligence he unlocked the heavenly treasures; he proposed them as worthy of the most ardent pursuit of an immortal soul; and showed by what means they were to be obtained. "Labor not," said he, "for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you." He declares himself a sufficient and willing Savior, when he says, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." He shows the absolute necessity of that intimate union with Him, which is

effected by his Spirit in the operations of faith; the happy result of which is a participation of his anointing. This unspeakable benefit he expresses in the following strong and metaphorical terms: "I am the bread of life. This is the bread which cometh down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Verily, verily I say unto you, except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." When this doctrine and these expressions were by many literally understood, our Savior immediately directed to a spiritual apprehension of them; and intimated, from his approaching ascension, that they could not *possibly* be *meant* in a *carnal* sense. "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before? It is the *Spirit* that quickeneth; the *flesh* profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you," that is, *my doctrines*, "they are spirit, and they are life."

Further, he shows that salvation is not of man, but of God: that we are *entirely* dependent upon Him for illumination to discern the truth, and for ability to embrace the blessings of his gospel: and thus, to drive us from every false hope, and bring us to the only foundation on which we can rest with safety, he explicitly declares, "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." And again, "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."

This exposition of his heavenly doctrines, and the faithfulness and love which prompted him to declare them, one would truly

think, ought certainly to have conciliated his hearers, and attached his professed followers more closely to his person. But these truths were too spiritual, and too humiliating for the generality to relish. As it often happens, they were well enough pleased with the exterior of the sanctuary; but had neither taste to discern those beauties, nor desire to possess those treasures, which make its inmost recesses glorious. The doctrine of man's impotency mortified their *pride;* of spiritual union to the LORD JESUS, opposed their carnal views; of sanctification, was adverse to their corruptions. They murmured; they were offended; and, it is added, "from that time many of the disciples went back, and walked no more with him." It was a season of general defection among those who professed to be CHRIST'S followers. It would seem the far greater portion had entirely renounced his authority, and thrown contempt upon his pretensions; for they walked no more with him." Their example, no doubt, had its effect; and the poison began to insinuate itself into the hearts of CHRIST'S real disciples. There was but a small number that still adhered to their Master. The thousands which had followed him, were no longer seen in his train. Those that were left, disheartened and disappointed, were in danger of becoming the victims of false shame. Even the *twelve*, the intimate friends of JESUS, and the *chosen* heralds of his gospel, appear to have been offended at this unexpected event, and to have had their faith greatly shaken. But the compassionate Savior, who knew their weakness, and the severity of the present trial, soon affords them seasonable relief. By a single question he brings to their recollection the wonderful displays of his power and grace; their inviolable obligations of attachment to his person and his cause; and the endearing relation which subsisted between *him* and *them*. "He said unto the twelve, will ye also go away?" This address instantly touches their hearts, and revives the languishing flame of their love. Returning hope and confidence strengthen their holy resolution never to forsake him; and prompt them to reply, "Lord, to whom shall we go? *Thou* hast the words of eternal life."

In this their confession of the Messiah is implied—a conviction of the insufficiency of all human means for the attainment of

salvation—a firm belief in his perfections and qualifications as a Savior—and a resolution to adhere to him as their Savior and LORD.

I. In this reply of the apostles is implied A CONVICTION OF THE INSUFFICIENCY OF ALL HUMAN MEANS FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF SALVATION. "LORD, to whom shall we go?" Shall we apply to the Scribes and Pharisees? Shall we inquire of the ceremonial or moral law? Shall we submit to the decisions of reason?

1. *The Scribes and Pharisees*, and other doctors of the law among the Jews, *at that period, were blind, leaders of the blind.* Their corruptions had darkened their minds, and thrown a veil over the sacred writings; so that the plainest prophecies were misunderstood, and the most important doctrines perverted by them. The "weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith," were overlooked or contemned; while particular and proud attention was given to the trifling duties of paying tithes for "mint, anise, and cummin." By their explications of the Holy Scriptures that which was plain became obscure; that which was of the first importance became indifferent; that which spoke of spiritual glories was construed to mean worldly splendors: and even Messiah, the Prince of Peace, the Redeemer from Sin, the Conqueror of Death, was, through the strange perverseness of their minds, expected under the character of an earthly monarch, who, for the salvation of the Jews, should become the conqueror of all the nations of the earth. To these absurd sentiments was superadded a higher veneration for the traditions of men than for the oracles of GOD: as is evident from the declaration of our Savior, "Ye have made the word of GOD of none effect by your traditions." Such being the character, and such the doctrines of the Jewish teachers, the apostles were convinced that from them no spiritual instruction could be derived.

2. Equally convinced were they that life and salvation could not be obtained from *an observance of the ceremonial or moral law.*

With respect to the *former* they knew that the tabernacle service was chiefly typical, and, under various representations, sha-

dowed forth good things to come. They knew that the sacrifice of a beast could never be accepted by GOD, as a real atonement for iniquity; and, therefore, that being sprinkled with the blood of the victim, was neither to be cleansed from the impurity, nor freed from the guilt of sin. Nor did they dare to rely upon the *moral* law, for acceptance with GOD, and a right to eternal life. Even if they could not recollect that they had been guilty of any gross immorality; if they were conscious that they deserved the character of peaceable and good citizens; yet they knew that they were far from that perfection which the law demands—that they were conceived in sin—that their hearts were by nature corrupt—and that GOD required truth in the inward parts. They heard Moses, as well as the Lord JESUS, declare "Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy mind: This is the first great commandment: And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy *neighbor* as *thyself*." Here they could not but see their awful deficiency, and be terribly alarmed, when they heard the voice of eternal truth declare, "The soul that sinneth, it *shall die*." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The law, then, so far from promising life, denounces death; so far from encouraging the hope of reward for our imperfect righteousness, for the imperfection of our righteousness threatens us with the wrath of GOD.

3. But could not *reason* have pointed out to them the path of life? The apostles do not hesitate on this subject. They are persuaded of the entire insufficiency of reason to effect this great end. They do not entertain the faintest hope that their reason, or the combined reason of mankind, is able, by all the light it can furnish, to conduct them to eternal felicity. And we are bold to maintain that this opinion is uniformly prevalent in those who have justly considered the immense importance of eternal things; who accurately appreciate their own powers; and who have enjoyed the common light of the Gospel.

Untaught by revelation, to what knowledge can we obtain respecting the salvation of a sinner?

Can human reason discover whether it is even *possible* for sin

to be pardoned, consistently with the truth and majesty of GOD, and with the good of the universe? Before it can come to a certain determination on this profound and awful subject, it should clearly understand the nature and extent of moral evil: the relation subsisting between the different orders of intelligent beings; and how they are affected, if any one order sustain so great a change as sin must occasion.—Besides, it would require a high and comprehensive knowledge of the Deity in his nature and attributes. Now, can reason inform us what shock is communicated to the chain of intellectual being—what inroad is made upon the system of order—what degree of misery is introduced into the universe, when a world falls into sin? Or, can it declare how such an event is viewed by the eternal mind? Every one who weighs these questions, must be convinced that reason is entirely unable to determine even the *possibility* of salvation.

Besides, if the possibility were admitted or proved, who, from his own reason, or the reason of all men, would be able to point out the *means* by which so great a good as redemption from sin could be effected? What finite intellect can disclose how the breach upon the system of order could be fully repaired? how all intelligences should understand that it is a terrible evil for the creature to break the laws of GOD? how the sanction of that law should be so enforced as to deter others from transgression? how the divine justice could be satisfied? and how GOD could maintain, without imputation, his essential character as a righteous Governor, who gives to every one his due? In what way all these momentous objects can be accomplished, and yet the sinner be justified and restored to the divine favor, human reason might as well pretend to discover, as we to mete out the heavens with our span, or measure the waters of the ocean in the hollow of our palm.

Again, though we should know what was necessary to be done in order to effect our redemption—can reason inform us whether GOD will *execute* the gracious and momentous work? Has reason been admitted to the counsels—has it discovered the secret plans of the ALMIGHTY? Does it perceive the evidences of pardoning mercy, in the corrupt affections of the heart; in the perverse bias of the will; or in the reprehensions and remorse of

an awakened conscience? Are the benificent designs of grace intimated, in the various infirmities, disappointments, and pains of this mortal life; in the fears and agonies of death; in the apprehensions of future judgment? Do they beam forth in the boundless splendors of nature, which declare the majesty and glory of GOD? Does this shaking of the earth, does this raging of the tempest, does this voice of the thunder, proclaim, in Reason's ear, JEHOVAH to be the "the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin?" For an answer we might refer you to the schools of Greece and Rome, or to the untaught Indian. In every age—in every clime—among civilized and barbarous nations—the uniform and distinct voice of reason has been, *I know not how sin can be pardoned; I am entirely ignorant of any way of salvation.* In vain, then, do those pretend to be her votaries, who are deaf to her salutary admonitions; who trample upon that solemn law which she utters in her loudest note. The disciples of our blessed LORD, though tempted by a general defection to desert him, were not under such strong delusion as to imagine that they could be saved by their imperfect obedience, or by the instrumentality of reason. They saw that all human means, and all possible efforts of created strength, were inadequate to accomplish their salvation; and, therefore, they reply to the affecting address of their LORD, "To whom shall we go?"

II. The text implies that they had A FIRM BELIEF IN HIS PERFECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS AS A SAVIOR: "Thou hast the words of eternal life." Thou hast communicated, in thy discourses, truths which refreshed and animated our souls. Thou hast not called our attention to the vain and perishing enjoyments of this transitory state, but hast spoken to us of spiritual blessings, of immortal honors, of eternal life. Thou alone canst direct our feet into the path of peace, and teach us the way of salvation. Though tempted to join the multitude of false disciples who have forsaken thee, though our own faith was beginning to fail;—yet, LORD, to whom, if we leave thee, can we go for comfort? Where can we find a master so affectionate—a friend so faithful? Where shall we hear such words of

mercy—such doctrines of wisdom, as have flowed from thy blessed lips?

1. This is the language of faith, and expresses the sentiments and exercises of every soul that flees to the Savior for refuge. The apostles, then, by this confession, acknowledge *their belief in* JESUS *as the promised Messiah.* They knew that GOD, by the mouth of his holy prophets, "at sundry times and in divers manners," had spoken of the great salvation to be accomplished by his Son. They knew, from the truth and faithfulness of GOD, that this promise could not fail, but would be fulfilled in its proper season; that the Savior was to be born in the city of Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah and family of David; that he should appear during the continuance of the second temple, and by his presence make it more glorious than the first; that the expected period had arrived; and that the whole Jewish nation, rulers as well as people, were anxiously waiting for the manifestation of this illustrious personage to Israel. They saw JESUS of Nazareth: They learned the circumstances of his birth and parentage: They heard him speak with great authority, and instruct with superior wisdom: They beheld the works of almighty power which he performed, the incontestible proofs of his mission, and seal of his divine ministry: And, seeing all these evidences, which none but GOD could give, in favor of the high and glorious character he assumed, they believed him to be that Prince and Savior, who should save his people from their sins.

2. In their confession they acknowledge, also, *a belief in his ability effectually to instruct men in the way of life.* The human mind is, by nature, enveloped in darkness. Ignorant of GOD, and of the truths necessary to lead it into the way of peace, it wanders in the labyrinths of error; experiences the disquietudes of doubt; and can enjoy no stable hope, until it receives illumination from on high. JESUS is that divine instructer who, by his word and Spirit, shines into the benighted soul, to give it "the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD" respecting the plan and means of salvation. Then the most interesting realities rise in all their importance, and appear in their true colors. Then are seen the justice, the holiness, the benignity of GOD; the evil of sin; the condition of the sinner, exposed to the divine wrath,

and entirely impotent of himself to escape its ruin; the glorious fulness, and gracious willingness of Jesus, to save to the uttermost; the abundant and incontestible proofs of this great truth in the beneficence of his life, the agonies of his death, the power of his resurrection, the honors of his session at the right hand of the Father, and the unspeakable blessings hence treasured up in him for miserable sinners. All these glorious realities are presented to the view of him who is thus divinely taught; arrest and rivet his attention; excite new emotions in his soul; awaken his hopes and fears; and cause him, with the utmost earnestness, as he would escape the misery and obtain the happiness here presented, to seek an interest in the merits of the only Savior. The confession in the text implies a belief that the Lord JESUS can illuminate the soul with the knowledge of all these interesting and momentous truths.

3. It also implies *faith in Him as the only atoning sacrifice.* Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins. Guilt renders us obnoxious to justice, and the demands of justice must be satisfied. It is hard to conceive that any person, having just views of the holiness of GOD, and convinced of his own transgressions, can trust in JESUS CHRIST as his Savior, without believing the doctrine of the atonement. Can we derive comfort from the perfect example he has set us, when we are conscious that we have not followed that example? If no expiation has been made, how shall our sins be pardoned? How shall our guilt be removed? How shall the threatening of the divine law be executed? How shall the truth of GOD, which declares the wages of sin to be death, be established? If the Lord JESUS has made no atonement for transgression, what is the meaning of the victim immolated on the altar? Why were the sacrifices under the law, shadows of good things to come? Why was the blood sprinkled upon the people, and upon the book of the covenant? If the Lord CHRIST did not make his soul an offering for sin, how is he "the Lamb of GOD which taketh away the sins of the world?" If the sword of divine justice did not smite him, what mean the sufferings that marked the whole of his life—the deep groans that proved his inward troubles—that cup of affliction from which his holy human nature recoiled—the unutterable agony

that caused his blood to gush through every pore—the mournful exclamation, in the extremity of his torture, "My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me?" Why all this accumulation of woe upon the soul of the innocent sufferer, if he had not been "wounded for our transgressions," and if the LORD had not "laid upon him the iniquity of us all?" To profess that he has the words of eternal life is, consequently, to believe that his doctrine directs to the fountain of his blood, which alone "cleanseth from all sin;" for, without the washing away of sins, eternal life is impossible.

4. To be a perfect Savior he must be able, also, to ensure everlasting life to those whose sins he expiated; and, therefore, he must be possessed of power to apply his purchased salvation to the souls of his people. He, who joins in this profession of the apostle, consequently, *acknowledges his kingly office;* in the execution of which he reigns over the hearts and wills of his redeemed, defends them from their spiritual foes, and subdues all things to himself.

Thus the text expresses a firm and full conviction that he is the Messiah promised by the FATHER; and, according to the purposes of divine wisdom, that he possesses all the qualifications, and executes all the offices, necessary to constitute an all-sufficient and glorious Savior.

III. From such a view of his offices, and a complete satisfaction in his undertaking and character, arises an unconquerable desire for the blessings which he has to bestow; and hence the words of the text are to be considered as expressing A FIRM RESOLUTION TO ADHERE TO HIM AS THEIR SAVIOR AND LORD. "To whom shall we go," say the disciples, "but unto thee." They see that they must of *necessity* follow him, if they shall ever obtain the pardon of sin, and the felicities of Paradise. They know that he is the only way to the FATHER; "for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Like those ready to perish, they lay hold on this "Rock of ages." United to him they see safety; separated from him they behold inevitable death. Under such impressions, they cannot but resolve—and resolve immediately—to cast themselves upon his arm for salvation, and never to forsake him.

This holy resolution is formed not merely from necessity, but from a conviction of the *honor*, *delight*, and immortal *glory*, which await the followers of the Lamb. If, then, there was no voice of justice pronouncing the woe of sin ; if there were no fiery prisons of wrath, and regions of everlasting despair : —still, the soul which had been taught of GOD would behold JESUS as "the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely ;" and pant after him as its only satisfying portion, and its "exceeding great reward." In the rapturous language of the Psalmist it would exclaim, "Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee ?" If, when the world offers to its votaries the enchantments of pleasure, the splendors of wealth, or the dazzling honors of exalted station and power, they readily resolve to grasp the delusive prize—how much more shall they who have been taught to make a due estimate of things, whose views extend to both worlds, who know that the service of GOD is rational and delightful, who have by faith seen the glory of the LORD'S Christ, and who believe that an interest in his merits will secure to them a bliss, large beyond measure, and permanent as the days of Heaven—how much more shall they, through good and evil report, and in all varieties of condition, firmly resolve to lay hold upon the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

My Christian brethren, is your resolution to be for CHRIST, to continue in his exalted service, to follow him as faithful disciples, habitual and predominant ? Especially, when you have been delivered from some impending danger, or fiery temptation ; when, through grace, your faith is unexpectedly strengthened ; or, when "the love of GOD is shed abroad" abundantly in your hearts ; do you not, with renewed ardor, cleave to your adorable Savior ? Does not his faithful remembrance of you, make him doubly precious in your sight ? When the unbelief of Thomas was succeeded by faith, and he saw and recognized the crucified Savior as arisen, his full heart could sacrcely express his gratitude and joy. He can but exclaim, "*My* LORD, and *my* GOD !" Amid his wonder and delight, he appropriates the blessed Redeemer to his soul ; and feels, what Peter declares in the text, an unconquerable resolution *never* to forsake him. When the LORD

made all his goodness pass before his servant Moses, and proclaimed his name, "The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin;" overcome with the wonderful manifestation of JEHOVAH'S love, he "made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped;" and having received large draughts of heavenly delight, he pants for the full fruition of GOD, and cries out, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory."

Such, in some measure, have been the exercises of thy soul, O Christian, when JESUS and his benefits have, in a peculiar manner, been manifested unto thee. What though false disciples go back to their folly, and walk no more with the Savior; what though multitudes never even profess his name; and but a little flock,—insignificant and contemptible, in the eye of the world,—be left to follow the good Shepherd; wilt *thou* not still repeat the profession, and make the holy resolution of the faithful few, "LORD, to whom shall I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life!" Christian, thou hast made a good choice. Be not afraid nor disheartened. GOD has revealed unto thee the pearl of great price, and given thee faith to make it thy own. O, greatly esteem thy precious treasure. Be *assured* of thy interest in it. If thou hast adopted the language of the apostles; if thou art convinced of the utter insufficiency of all created means to rescue thee from ruin, and make thee an heir of eternal joys; if thou hast resolved, and dost still resolve, to receive the LORD CHRIST as all-sufficient for these glorious purposes; be encouraged. Thy merciful Redeemer casteth none out that come unto GOD through him. "Supported by the power of CHRIST, and by thy own faith, thou shalt be safe in the midst of dangers. Without *that* power, thy faith will prove vain. Without thy faith, *that* power will not be exerted."* Come, then, and avail yourselves of this great salvation. Seek in CHRIST pardon and deliverance, and embrace his offered mercy. Thy faith shall be increased, thy resolutions strengthened; thy mourning shall be changed into laughter, thy darkness into day; and in "JEHOVAH, thy Righteousness," thou "shalt be justified, and shalt glory."

* Bishop Hall.

THE

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SERMON BY THE LATE RIGHT REV. JOHN HENRY HOBART, D. D.
SERMON BY THE REV. THOMAS W. COIT.

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ON THE OFFICES OF CHRIST:

A Sermon

BY THE LATE RT. REV. JOHN HENRY HOBART, D. D.

Jeremiah, xxiii. 6.—"*And this is the name whereby he shall be called—The* LORD *our Righteousness.*"

THE prophet, in the verses connected with my text, predicts the coming of the Messiah, and exhibits his glorious offices as "a King who should reign and prosper, and execute judgment and justice in the earth, in whose days Judah should be saved, and Israel dwell safely."

Of this Messiah, who "in the fulness of time" appeared in the person of CHRIST, my text affirms—"This is the name whereby he shall be called—The LORD our Righteousness"—in the idiom of the sacred language equivalent to saying—He shall be—The LORD our Righteousness. Thus where it is said of this same blessed personage, that his name shall be called Immanuel—the meaning is, that he shall be Immanuel—GOD with us—as when it is said—"Jerusalem shall be called an holy city:" the meaning obviously is, Jerusalem shall be an holy city.

Thus then, my text, in calling the Messiah, CHRIST our Lord, JEHOVAH, establishes his divinity. For JEHOVAH is the name that denotes the essence, the infinite, eternal, and immutable nature of GOD; and therefore, to apply it to any created being, would be the most tremendous blasphemy. JESUS CHRIST then, the Messiah, is JEHOVAH—"GOD over all," as stiled by the apostle.

It is my intention, however, to enlarge not on the divinity of

Christ as JEHOVAH, but on the other character ascribed to him in my text as "our Righteousness."

In what respects does CHRIST become the justifier, the righteousness of his people? is the inquiry I mean to prosecute.

CHRIST becomes the "righteousness" of his people, of those who believe in him.

I. As their *Atoning Mediator.*

II. As their *Evangelical Lawgiver*, and

III. As their *Almighty Sanctifier.*

As their atoning *Mediator*, he procures the pardon of their sins. As their *Lawgiver*, he places them under an evangelical law, obedience to which will secure to them the favor of GOD. And as their *Sanctifier*, he impresses this law on their hearts, and enables them sincerely to obey it. He thus becomes their righteousness, completely justifies them, by freeing them from the guilt and dominion of sin, and by renewing them to holiness, thus releasing them from the wrath of GOD, and restoring them to his favor.

But in considering the various characters in which CHRIST becomes the righteousness of his people, it is necessary to bring into view in all these respects, his *Divinity.* It is *this* which gives full effect to his agency as our Mediator, Lawgiver, and Sanctifier. And it is *this*, his divine character as "JEHOVAH," which, in the view of all his offices, infinitely augments our duties and our encouragements.

Exhibiting then CHRIST not only in the various offices in which he becomes "our Righteousness," but in connexion with each, his divine power as JEHOVAH, I shall, I conceive, have fully exhibited him to your grateful adoration, confidence, and obedience, as "JEHOVAH our *Righteousness.*"

I. CHRIST becomes the righteousness of those who believe in him—as their *Atoning Mediator.*

Fact, as well as Scripture, affirm the truth, that man is a fallen creature, subject to the displeasure of the infinitely good, and holy and just Being, whose laws as his Maker and Sovereign, he has transgressed, and to whom as his Judge he is accountable.

Of the Jews, on whom GOD bestowed the revelation of his will

in the precepts and institutions of the Law, as well as of the Gentiles, who were left to the light of natural reason and traditional religion, sad was the denunciation of the apostle.—They "have all gone out of the way—they have altogether become unprofitable —there is none that doeth good, no not one."

The first step, therefore, in the recovery of fallen man, subject as he is, on account of his transgressions, to the displeasure of his Maker, is to free him from that penalty, by sustaining it; and to obey, and thus to satisfy the just and holy law of GOD, which man has violated; in other words—*to make expiation for man's guilt.* But how could man make this expiation? The most perfect obedience which he could render, would only be discharging the obligations already incumbent on him, and therefore could not atone for past transgressions, nor entitle him to a release from the penalty of his Maker's wrath, which by those transgressions he had justly incurred. It is evident that man, as a sinner, must have a righteousness better, *infinitely* better, than his own, even that divine, all perfect righteousness of the SON of GOD, by which the claims of the divine law were satisfied to the uttermost, and fallen man released from its penalties.

The SON, the second person of the Godhead, "JEHOVAH," became "our righteousness." In our nature he became subject to that law by which we were bound, and *fully* obeyed it. In our nature he sustained the penalties of that law which we had transgressed, which was *death;* and thus the blood which he shed, became a fountain, in which the deepest stains of sin might be washed away in our nature. By virtue of his all perfect obedience and all sufficient atonement, the SON becomes vested by the FATHER with power as Mediator, to release from their sins all that come to him. "If any man sin, he has an advocate with the FATHER, even JESUS CHRIST the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins. Whosoever cometh unto him he will in no wise cast out."

Salvation is thus of grace, free unmerited grace, not of works, lest any man should boast. To the humble and penitent, who feel and acknowledge their subjection to sin, and flee for refuge from the wrath denounced against them to JESUS CHRIST,

"JEHOVAH their Righteousness," he dispenses the fulness of pardon. Those who thus come unto him by faith, he justifies from sin—releases them from its penalty, and puts them into a state of reconciliation with GOD. In his office of Atoning Mediator, JESUS CHRIST becomes the righteousness of his people, in whom *alone* they are pardoned and restored to the favor of GOD.

But it is his character and power as "JEHOVAH" the LORD which renders CHRIST a *prevailing* Mediator. Unsanctified by his Godhead, the blood which he shed as man would be of little more avail than the blood of bulls and of goats, which, rested in as of themselves efficacious, became an abomination unto the LORD. Unsanctified by his Godhead, the obedience which he rendered would be only the debt of obligation which every creature owes to its Creator, and would be of no efficacy towards atoning for the transgressions of the whole race of mankind. But the blood of the *incarnate Son of God*, is of infinite efficacy. The obedience which *he*, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead, rendered, partakes of the glory of the Godhead, and sheds infinite lustre on the divine law. Sprinkled with that blood which the Godhead hath enriched, the penitent sinner fears not the wrath of the destroying angel of justice. Covered with that righteousness with which the Godhead hath invested him, the true believer can stand even the searching beams of divine holiness.

Behold then, my brethren, both the *way* by which we are to be justified from our sins, and our *encouragement* to apply for mercy. The atonement of CHRIST, the LORD our Righteousness, is the *only* meritorious cause of our pardon. In a deep sense of our need of this atonement as guilty, depraved sinners, we *must* apply for an interest in it. Washed by *this* blood, we shall be justified in the sight of GOD. Our sins that were "as scarlet," shall become "white as snow;" though they were "red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The penalties of the divine law which we had violated, were sustained by the SON of GOD, and its glory vindicated by his all perfect obedience. Access, through him, is thus opened to that throne, which from the unsparing throne of justice is changed into the attractive throne of grace and mercy.

He, who is our Intercessor, the LORD our Righteousness, is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto GOD through him. Distrust not that mercy which is infinite; repose with confidence on *that* grace which is Almighty—JEHOVAH is your righteousness!

In the justification of fallen man, the first step is to release him from the guilt and condemnation of his sins, and to put him into a state of reconciliation with GOD. This work, to which no created agency is adequate, is effected by the all-sufficient atonement of CHRIST JESUS the LORD as Mediator. In this part of the process of justification, no qualifications are required on the part of man, but a *lively* sense of his need of mercy, and a *full* reliance on the propitiation of the LORD his righteousness. But as he is to be fitted for eternal happiness by the love and service of his Maker, a rule of duty must be prescribed and imposed on him. CHRIST therefore becomes the righteousness of his people—

II. As their *Lawgiver*—imposing on them a law of evangelical holiness and perfection.

In his first estate, man was subject to a law, whose rewards were granted only to unsinning obedience, and whose fatal penalty was —"The soul that sinneth, it shall die." By transgressing this law, he fell into a state of guilt and condemnation. From its penalties, and from its obligation as a law of unsinning obedience, he is released by the evangelical covenant. But "is the law made void through grace?" GOD forbid. CHRIST "came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil." GOD is unchangeably holy. His happiness is founded on his holiness; and no creature can be happy but as he resembles GOD. "Without holiness, no man shall see the LORD."

In the work of redemption, therefore, which was designed to conduct man to perfect and eternal happiness, it was absolutely necessary that he should be made subject to a law, holy and spiritual, by which the divine image, in which he was created, but which he lost at the fall, might be restored to his soul. This law it was part of the office of CHRIST, the LORD our Righteousness, to delineate and prescribe. On those, therefore, whom, as Mediator, he releases from the guilt of sin, he imposes a law of holiness, which extends through the whole sphere of religious and moral

duty; and which is designed to regulate and purify the inmost principles of the heart. Though these believers are freed from the obligation of the law of works, which requires unsinning obedience; they are placed under a law of *grace*, not less holy and spiritual, in which sincere obedience, which is all that they can render, is accepted through him, who alone is their all-perfect righteousness.

And shall they "sin, because they are not under the law, but under grace?" God forbid. "Being made free from sin," as the apostle argues, "they are made servants of righteousness." "Dead unto sin, they are made alive unto GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord." They are translated from a state of sin and condemnation, into a state of favor and evangelical holiness. Deliverance from the guilt of sin is but a prelude in the work of justification to deliverance from its power. The atonement of CHRIST has released the sinner from the curse of a violated law. But the blessed work of redemption would be frustrated were the subject of divine mercy absolved from the obligation of the law, and while he exults in the mercy, could defy the holiness of GOD. The destiny of man which the scheme of redemption is designed to further and to secure, is to be eternally happy in the presence of GOD. For *this* presence, holiness is an indispensable qualification. In the justification of those who believe, therefore, CHRIST acts not only as Mediator, procuring their pardon, but also as Lawgiver, delineating the nature and extent, and enforcing the obligations of the divine law. In this character, we are to acknowledge, receive, and obey him, and he thus becomes "the LORD our Righteousness."

It is the divine character of CHRIST as "JEHOVAH," the LORD, which gives awful yet affecting energy and dignity to his office as our *Lawgiver*, and to the obligations, and sanctions of his laws. How holy and spiritual must those laws be which the Godhead promulgated not by prophets, men of unclean lips, but by the eternal SON, who is *himself* "JEHOVAH." Viewing the Son as thus possessing all the *powers* of the Godhead, when we regard him as our Lawgiver, we are impressed with awe and terror, like that which penetrated the Israelites at the foot of Sinai! But when we consider the infinite *condescension* of the LORD of Glory

in taking upon him our nature, that he might appear a more compassionate instructer, and teach us, not only by his plain and powerful precepts, but by his familiar and blessed example, we are penetrated with emotions of affection and gratitude, like those which the beloved disciple must have felt, when he reclined on the bosom of his Divine Master, and drank in the instructions of his lips.

The law of CHRIST, as JEHOVAH our Lawgiver, is thus enforced by the united influence of the sentiments of fear and love. We fear to offend a Lawgiver, who, as JEHOVAH, searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins of the children of men; who penetrates through the darkness of night, and will bring into judgment every secret thing; and who is able to destroy forever both soul and body. The lively emotions of affection prompt us to yield a cheerful and devoted obedience to him, who, the eternal SON, JEHOVAH, yet took upon him our frail and miserable nature, to suffer and to die, that we might live forever.

CHRIST, therefore, becomes the righteousness of his people by subjecting them to a holy and spiritual law; and they, who, through faith, have received him as their Mediator, are bound to acknowledge him as their *Lawgiver*, and submit to his authority, in order that the dominion of sin may be subdued, and the reign of grace and holiness supremely established in their hearts.

This leads me to consider the third respect in which CHRIST becomes our *righteousness*—

III. As our ALMIGHTY *Sanctifier*—who impresses on our hearts the obligations of the divine law, and enables us to obey it.

The purpose of our merciful and gracious GOD in our redemption would be but imperfectly answered by releasing us from the guilt of our sins, and subjecting us to a more holy and spiritual law. Deliverance from the *guilt* of our sins is the consequence of our earnest desire to be released from their *dominion*. But this blessed work is hereafter to be accomplished. The holiness and spirituality of the law to which we are subjected would, through the frailty and corruption of our nature, only multiply and aggravate our transgressions, and thus minister to our heavier condemnation. To our final justification, therefore, it is absolutely necessary that

provision be made for releasing us from the dominion of sin, and for renovating and changing our hearts, that we may be able to serve GOD in newness of spirit, and in holiness of life. CHRIST acts not only as *Mediator*, granting to us forgiveness; as *Lawgiver*, subjecting us to a law of duty; but as an Almighty Sanctifier, writing this law on our minds, and imbuing us with its holy spirit and virtues. By the operations of that blessed Comforter which he promised, and sent unto his Church, he performs this work of sanctification in the hearts of believers. They are "chosen," saith the apostle, "unto salvation, through *sanctification* of the SPIRIT." They are *sanctified* by the SPIRIT of GOD.

It is thus, by the agency of the SPIRIT, that CHRIST completes his character "as our Righteousness;" enlightening our understandings, to discern the purity and excellence of his law; placing our affections upon it, as our supreme good; inclining our wills to a conformity with its holy precepts; giving us a clean heart and a right spirit; and creating us *anew* unto good works. The divine image being thus restored to our souls, we become the objects of GOD'S favor, and are prepared for his blissful presence. In infinite mercy he grants this HOLY SPIRIT to our earnest prayers, and to our devout participation of the ordinances of his Church, his mystical body. In the use of these means, his unchanging promise seals to us the influences of his SPIRIT, so that we abound in every good word and work, in the fruits of righteousness, meekness, and truth. Thus is complete provision made for our release from the bondage of sin, and our being reinstated in all the graces and virtues of the divine image.

It is the divinity of CHRIST which gives Almighty energy to his agency as our *Sanctifier*. Redeemed from the bondage of sin, renewed in all holy graces, guided in the way of GOD'S law and in the works of his commandments, by the Almighty agency of "JEHOVAH our Righteousness," our own perverse and wilful rebellion alone can frustrate our sanctification, and our eternal restoration to the favor of GOD.

Behold now, my brethren, in what respects CHRIST may be considered as "the LORD our Righteousness," as our divine *Mediator*, he makes a perfect atonement for our sins, and grants to us

forgiveness, as our divine *Lawgiver*, he subjects us to his evangelical law, which inculcates universal holiness. As our Almighty *Sanctifier*, he releases us from the bondage of sin, and grants us grace strictly and universally to obey his holy precepts.

Let us then learn—

1. To ascribe our salvation to the *free* and unmerited *grace* of GOD.

JEHOVAH is "our Righteousness." In our fallen state, no arm but his could save us. Our wilful transgressions separated us from the favor of GOD, and rendered us obnoxious to his justice. Depraved and guilty, we could neither make propitiation for the past, nor secure our obedience for the future. So incapable is man, independently of the grace of JEHOVAH his Righteousness, of any effectual efforts towards his salvation, that his deplorable condition is designated by the emphatic language "*dead* in trespasses and sins." Even of the law of GOD, in its spiritual nature and full extent, *unrenewed* man is ignorant; for it is an inspired declaration, "The *natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of GOD, neither indeed can he, because they are *spiritually* discerned." While he is thus "alienated from the life of GOD," and an "enemy to GOD through wicked works," it would be folly to suppose that of himself he would break the chains of his bondage, and, renouncing the sins to which, prompted by nature, he is riveted by habit, seek those divine virtues which he has hated and shunned.

No—JEHOVAH alone is our Righteousness. An Almighty Redeemer only could expiate our sins, enlighten us in the knowledge and will of GOD, and sanctify our corrupt souls. All the means of our justification are the work of a *divine* power. These gracious means were furnished, not only without any agency of man, but when he was in rebellion against the merciful GOD, whose purpose it was to save him. "When we were enemies," saith the apostle, "GOD reconciled us to himself." Let then "every mouth be stopped, and the whole world confess itself guilty in the sight of GOD." Let the sinner learn that the first step in his salvation is to humble himself as guilty and helpless, and adoring the unsearchable riches of GOD's grace, who hath pro-

vided the means of his justification, to glory in the "LORD his Righteousness."

2. But while we humbly acknowledge and adore the free grace of GOD in our salvation, let us remember that there are *qualifications on our part.*

The Savior is, indeed, plenteous in redemption; but he dispenses his mercies as Mediator only to those who come unto him. As a *Lawgiver*, he is infinitely perfect—but he enlightens in the knowledge of that law only the sincere and humble, who seek to know his will. As a *Sanctifier*, he is Almighty—but he grants his Spirit only in the use of those means which he has enjoined, and the rebellious and obstinate may resist, and quench his holy inspirations. There is salvation in *no other* but in CHRIST, JEHOVAH our *Righteousness.*

Would we then, my brethren, secure an interest in him, the only and all-sufficient Savior, let us go unto him, confessing our lost and miserable state, and casting ourselves on his infinite mercy and power as our *Mediator.* Blind as we are, by nature, to the excellence of divine truth, and indisposed to spiritual things, let us seek his illuminations, and submit ourselves to his authority, as our supreme and righteous *Lawgiver.* Corrupt and depraved as we are in our natural condition, let us implore his renovating grace as our Almighty *Sanctifier*, and attend on those ordinances of his Church, which are the means of conveying it. Thus let us seek the Savior, and we shall find him full of grace and truth—the LORD our Righteousness.

Blessed JESUS—be it unto us according to thy word. Pardon, enlighten, sanctify, and finally save us:—that through the ages of eternity we may ascribe unto thee, JEHOVAH our *Righteousness*, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, all power, majesty, and dominion, for ever. Amen.

REBELLION AGAINST GOD:

A Sermon

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Isaiah i. 2.—"*Hear O heavens! and give ear O earth! for the* LORD *hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.*"

REBELLION is defined to be "an open and avowed renunciation of the authority of the government to which one owes allegiance." It is considered to imply a bitterer hostility than the violence or menaces of any foreign foe, since such a foe may have some equitable grounds for his opposition, and in any case breaks no bond of fealty. A rebel, by the very title which is applied to him, is supposed to resist where he ought to obey, and to injure where he ought to reverence. His crime, therefore, is considered the highest, perhaps, which can be perpetrated, and also the most excuseless.

If rebellion against a human government be thus criminal, by parity of reason, rebellion against the government of Heaven must be even *atrocious*. Yet the prophet declares, without preface to introduce, or qualification to soften, that the Israelites were rebels against their benignant Maker.

And, my hearers, had he made a similar averment, not with respect to you only, but to all transgressors, of every name and age, I am constrained to believe that his language would be literally true. In other words, I am constrained to believe that all sin partakes of the nature of rebellion. It is freely acknowledged that this is an idea, mortifying, repulsive, and even awful. It is freely acknowledged that the man who can utter it without pain, is destitute of all correct apprehensions concerning his own wants and exposures, and all genuine sympathy for the wants and exposures of his fellow-creatures. It is acknowledged, also, with equal freedom, that he who can utter it with feelings of triumph or denunciation, is actuated by a spirit scarcely less than diabolical.

At the same time it is maintained that, if it be true, it is of great,

nay, of infinite importance, that we should admit it, with all its humiliating consequences. To this every candid and honest mind will unquestionably accede.

Let us then, my brethren, carefully remembering how vast the interests it involves, approach the idea in question, and examine the evidence by which it is supported. Let us approach it with impartial minds and susceptive hearts, never forgetting that it is one in which the speaker is concerned as fully as his hearers—one therefore in relation to which there can be no motive for overstatement.

The criminality of rebellion must, of course, be affected by the nature of the government and administration against which it is exerted. It must be measured by the mildness and propriety of the system whose authority it renounces, and by the patience, lenity, and wisdom, with which that system is administered. If the government be despotic in its character, and administered with implacable or ferocious sternness, it can hardly be unlawful, and may be deserving of commendation. If the government be paternal in its character, and administered with paternal sensibilities, then it must be inexcusable and criminal to a degree absolutely appalling.

It becomes me, then, in the prosecution of this discourse, to dwell, to some extent, upon the nature of the divine government, and the manner in which its precepts are urged, and its sanctions enforced.

1. And, in the first place, you will remark that this government is paternal in the object of its precepts.

A despot seeks his own glory and pleasure rather than the benefit of his people. To him it matters not if his exactions contravene the most obvious and fundamental principles of justice, and drain the life-blood from thousands on thousands, so that *his* aims of conquest be accomplished, and *he* reign with broader sway, and more dazzling splendor. To him, too, it matters as little, if thousand on thousands are deprived of comforts, perhaps of necessaries, and compelled to toil, till wornout nature sinks beneath the imposition, so that *his* passions may be pampered, and *his* appetites glutted. Cared such men as Alexander, or Napoleon Bonaparte, think you, for the waste of life and treasure which their towering ambition cost? Cared such as Caracalla, or Helio-

gabalus, for the enormous expenditure with which their brutal desires were satiated? No, my hearers, they lived as though possessed by the idea that the world itself was made for *them*, and they enjoyed the inalienable right, as well as the indisputable power, to sport with the temporal destinies of mankind.

Now it is the property of a father to look upon his children with sentiments completely different. He regards them as any thing but his slaves, or the menial instruments of his pleasures. He regards them, in themselves considered, as endowed with the same title to happiness as himself. He even reverences that title, and dare not abuse their sacred privileges for purposes at once degraded and selfish. And (which is more) he loves their happiness. He rejoices when they are glad. His continual aim, and one of his most delightful reversions, is to see their countenances illuminated, and their hearts expanded, by rational, pure, and innocent joy. All his discipline has no reference to his personal and independent advantage, but to their highest good. He is their governor, in the sense in which *that* word was often used in the languages from which it is derived. He is their *guide*—their guide to virtue, and its sublime and imperishable rewards.

Contemplate the exhibitions of His government and its economy, which God has made in Revelation, and see whether the same dispositions are not manifest in Him. He chooses to apply to himself the most encouraging and endearing epithets, in order to assure men of his tender and inexhaustible interest in their welfare. He calls himself their Shepherd, their Counsellor, their Deliverer, their Father. The whole scheme and tenor of Revelation are a beautiful and affecting illustration of the propriety and significance of these and other epithets, by which He is pleased to designate himself. The entire and simple aim of all and every one of his commands, and the motives by which He urges them, appears to be our advancement in knowledge, holiness, and felicity, that we may be fitted for his own presence, and intimate communion; for the exalted dignities and interminable bliss of the realms where his honor dwelleth. If men coincided with this aim, if they universally loved and obeyed His statutes, the world would be regenerated, moral evil would be annihilated, and Paradise be regained

in very deed. In the lofty language of the prophet, "the mountains and the hills would break forth before us into singing, and all the trees of the field would clap their hands:"—"triumph and everlasting joy would be upon our heads, we should obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing would flee away."

2. In the second place, we have a decided proof that the government of GOD is paternal in the length of His forbearance.

The forbearance of every other character has its limits, and in general is speedily exhausted; but the forbearance of a father has no measure. Remark, particularly, the unlikeness between the forbearance of a father and a guardian. The one will extend it so far as his *interest* or *reputation* may require. The other thinks not of *these* things, but of the shame and woe which will follow from the direful moment, when he shall say that the period of clemency has *ceased*, and that of retribution *come*. A guardian is soon weary of the multiplied and unabated excesses of his ward; his patience flags when repeated admonitions are unavailing; his pride is wounded when they are received with indifference or scorn, and if he be not constrained by obligations which he cannot abandon with honor, or by profits which he cannot relinquish with impunity, how soon will he cast forth the incorrigible stripling from his protection and guidance, and leave him to pursue his chosen way, and be filled with his own devices.

But a father "suffereth long, and is kind." Repeated failures, in admonition or correction, do not dishearten him. Unheeded counsel is urged with *earnestness* as fresh, and *eloquence* as pleading and warm, as ever! Disappointment succeeding disappointment, does not alienate his feelings, or kindle in his bosom the fire of revengeful indignation. He *suffers*, indeed; *suffers inexpressibly* more than *any* guardian can ever do. He is confounded by disobedience; he is stung by ingratitude; he is tortured by the withering spectacle of a child deliberately travelling that awful course, of which a sage, inspired by the ALMIGHTY, has affirmed that it is "the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Yet is he most reluctant to exchange these feelings for the more tolerable ones of anger and abhorrence. He pursues his unnatural offspring with warnings, entreaties, and proffers of for-

giveness; and when all beside have resigned him as altogether irrecoverable, he, hoping against hope, still clings to him, and soothes his harrassed heart with some fond promises of his ultimate redemption. Truly, says Solomon, "love is strong as death;" its empire, where it is *firmly* seated in the heart, is as complete and as resistless as that of the terrific king, to whose mighty sceptre every mortal is compelled to bow.

Now, again contemplate the administration of JEHOVAH, and see if it be not characterised by the dispositions of a father. Dwell upon the varied and ever wonderful history of the Jewish nation, and the proofs of these dispositions will become more and more conspicuous, until, like collected rays of light, they form a wide radiating beam of glory.

The Israelites forfeit the blessings of the covenant, times which cannot be repeated; but the favor of GOD, if discontinued, seems to brood over them, as though waiting for an opportunity to descend and bless them, and upon the first symptom of relenting and compunction, hastens down to enrich and sanctify them, and fill their hearts with joy and gladness. When repulsed, it goes not utterly away. Standing as it were aloof, it at one time, in the person of a prophet, pours forth the language of parental yearning, "How shall I give thee up Ephraim? i. e. to punishment. How shall I deliver thee Israel? i. e. to thine enemies. How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zaboim? [Cities overwhelmed in the fiery deluge, with Sodom and Gomorrah.] Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." At another, in the person of our Savior, it sheds compassion's precious tear, and utters its pathetic lamentation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Who but a father—who but a father surpassing all below, that have honored this endearing name, could have borne so *long*, and so *meekly*, with the thankless, the wayward, the insensate, the audacious, the provoking! Who but a father, such as Heaven alone can furnish, would return

good for evil, and blessing for cursing, hundreds and thousands of years, and then, when any finite experimenter had utterly despaired, resolve to vanquish his enemies, not by terror, wasting and woe, but by the omnipotence of grace and mercy! Who, but a GOD, and a paternal GOD, would have closed such a strange and melancholy history as that of Israel, by sending "his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Truly, my hearers, there is no greater wonder, no deeper *mystery* than this. It seems any thing but the effusion of extravagance—it seems the most natural dictate of sober and calm conviction to exclaim with St. Paul, as he contemplated the unfathomable sagacity which could devise, and the peerless skill which could execute, such a transcendent purpose: "Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD! How unsearchable are His determinations, and His ways past finding out!"

3. In the third and last place, you have an irrefragable proof that the government of GOD is paternal in the nature of His tenderness. It is not, my hearers, the tenderness of pity, it is the tenderness of love. The philanthropist commiserates the distresses of his fellow-creatures, and magnanimously resolves to meliorate them. But he is not animated by that *quick*, that *lively*, that *overpowering*, self-sacrificing tenderness, which prompts the exertions of a father in behalf of his suffering child. No; *that* tenderness shrinks from no expenditure, falters before no obstacles. And such was the tenderness of GOD; for it is not said that he so pitied, but that "he so *loved* the world, as to give his *only* begotten Son, that whosoever believeth upon him should not perish, but should have everlasting life."

We know not the value of the proof, and probably in *this* world shall never know it, but by feeble approximation. A glimpse of its worth dawns upon us when we read that he is GOD's *only* begotten or *well* beloved Son; that he is one in whom GOD is ever well pleased; ono who dwelt in the bosom of divinity ere the worlds were formed; who thinks it no robbery to claim divine prerogatives and honors. But what finite mind can tell the

measureless excellence, the priceless estimation, the inseparable and all-hallowed ties which are intimated by language like this? The ideas which it embraces are too lofty for our perception. They reach even to Heaven, and are lost amid the boundless expansion, and the incomprehensibilities of eternity.

We can approach such a proof of tenderness, as the gift of GOD'S blessed Son for our salvation, only through what we know of our imperfect selves. We know, for example, that a father can give no higher proof of his patriotism than by arming an only son, in whom his strongest affections centre, and on whom his proudest hopes repose, and bidding him go forth and shed his blood with freedom in fighting his country's battles. We see GOD sending one, on whom he bestows the most expressive appellations of endearment, and the loftiest titles of even supernal dignity; see Him sending such an one to assume the condition of a servant, to toil for his daily sustenance; to be poor and homeless; to be reviled, persecuted, condemned, and crucified; and, in the most intolerable moments of a most intolerable death, to be forsaken, and to bear alone and unsustained his accumulated sufferings; and this, and all this, that his soul might be an offering for sin, and through his chastisement our spiritual maladies be healed.

My hearers, arguing as a finite being from such examples as our nature and history can furnish, might I not say, was it possible even for Heaven to do more? But I forbear; I know that I am trespassing on the mysteries of an unseen and a future world, and leave the subject for heartfelt awe, and silent, yet overcoming admiration.

And now,—to return to the position for which these reflections upon the divine government and its administration have been brought to view,—if sin be the resistance of the commands and claims, the motives and expostulations, the grace and mercy, of One who has given us such illustrious proofs of his paternal regard and goodnees—can it be other than rebellion? Can it be other than rebellion of an aggravated, nay, my hearers, of a most *aggravated* character? The inference is dismal—is *tremendous!*—this is readily allowed; but can it fairly and logically be avoided? Would to GOD it might be, for it falls upon each and *all* of us

with a weight well nigh insupportable! but where is the acumen—indeed where is the sophistry which can evade it? To sin is to offend One, whose highest aim, in all his injunctions, and in all his discipline, is to train us for honor, and glory, and immortality. To sin is to offend One, whose forbearance prolongs a ten, a twenty, a hundred, a thousand times forfeited, space for repentance. To sin is to offend One, who gave his Son (unspeakable gift!) for the redemption of the lost. Alas! my hearers, search the world, search the universe through, and *where* shall we find an offence against *higher* authority, longer *patience*, or purer *love*, than the sin of a child of man against his Heavenly Father? The consideration should silence every whisper of pretension to meritorious virtue, and stir up the sentiments of profound contrition. It should take every symptom of stubbornness away, and make us self-accusing, lowly, and brokenhearted. My brethren, we call GOD Father, and it is an invaluable privilege that we are permitted so to do, since it assures us of mercy, when mercy otherwise were hopeless; but when we think of the aspect which his paternal relations to us give to sin, I know not the word throughout the Bible which should so prostrate and abase us. What! are we transgressors of a father's wisest and most lenient precepts? abusers of a father's most enlarged long suffering? contemners of a father's richest love? Oh, if GOD himself had not said otherwise, I should say, we must all, all despair. And does GOD bid sinners; does he bid us (as I dare not bid you nor myself to do, but on his own authority), does he bid *us* hope? And will we not seize that hope, and cling to it? Will we not rest and fully rely upon that Savior who is its sure foundation? Will we not implore the patronage of that Spirit who can increase and perfect it?

Then, verily, I know not whither we can go, nor where we can find salvation! Then, verily, I fear the Gospel is hid to us, and we are lost!

HYMN.

ON THE OFFICES OF CHRIST.

'T is from the treasures of his word
I borrow titles for my LORD;
Nor art, nor nature can supply
Sufficient forms of majesty.

Bright image of the Father's face,
Shining with undiminished rays;
Th' eternal GOD's eternal Son,
The heir, and partner of his throne.

The *King of kings*, the *Lord most High*,
Writes his own name upon his thigh:
He wears a garment dipped in blood,
And breaks the nations with his rod.

Where grace can neither melt nor move
The *Lamb* resents his injured love,
Awakes his wrath without delay,
And *Judah's Lion* tears the prey.

But when for works of peace he comes,
What winning titles he assumes!
Light of the world, and *Life of men;*
Nor bears those characters in vain.

With tender pity in his heart
He acts the *Mediator's* part;
A *friend* and *brother* he appears
And well fulfils the names he wears.

At length the *Judge* his throne ascends,
Divides the rebels from his friends,
And saints in full fruition prove
His rich variety of love.

HYMN.

THE REBEL'S RETURN TO GOD.

When with my mind devoutly prest,
Dear Savior, my revolving breast
Would past offences trace;
Trembling I make the black review,
Yet pleased behold, admiring too,
The power of changing Grace.

This tongue, with blasphemies defiled,
These feet to erring paths beguiled,
In heavenly league agree.
Who could believe such lips could praise,
Or think my dark and winding ways
Should ever lead to thee!

These eyes, that once abused their sight,
Now lift to thee their wat'ry light,
And weep a silent flood:
These hands are raised in ceaseless prayer;
O, wash away the stains they wear,
In pure redeeming blood.

These ears, that pleased could entertain
The midnight oath, the sportive strain,
When round the festive board;
Now, deaf to all th' enchanting noise,
Avoid the throng, detest the joys,
And press to hear thy word.

Thus thou art served in every part:
O, wouldst thou more transform my heart,
The drossy mass refine,
That grace might nature's strength control,
And a new creature—body, soul—
Be, Lord, for ever thine.

THE

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SERMONS BY THE REV. BENJAMIN B. SMITH, D. D.

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THE UNBOUNDED BENEVOLENCE OF GOD:

A Sermon

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Romans viii. 32.—"*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things?*"

If ever intelligent and sensitive creatures were placed in a condition to need a hope above them, to strengthen their hearts in the day of trouble, we, dwellers in the dust, find ourselves in that condition. Children, in their utter ignorance, and total blindness to the future, do not more need the provident care and watchful kindness of a father, than we need the guidance of a reconciled God. Widows, in the extremity of their helplessness and dependence, are not more worthy objects of compassion than all of us are every moment of our lives. And shipwrecked mariners need not strain their eyes more to look out for help from the land, or tax their energies more to grasp the floating fragments of a wreck, than we to look up to the hills "from whence cometh our help," and to cleave to the promises of God in Christ Jesus. Take man, in his very best estate, when his mind is keen to discern, and his energies mighty to execute, the best and wisest plans of worldly aggrandizement—and yet, man at his very "best estate is altogether vanity." What can he do for the best interests even of those who are dearest to his heart, or most dependent on his care? How can he avert from them, or from himself, the most desolating and terrible afflictions? How can he save his own life from destruction, or provide a ransom for his own soul? Take the

world of mankind as we find them—who are not struggling, like a shipwrecked mariner for life, and amongst the broken fragments of his ruined prospects, his lost comforts, his dying friends, his expiring hopes? If there is no power above us, we are infinitely worse off than the beasts that perish? If there be no foothold for our hopes in a better and brighter world, happy had it been for us if we had never been born. If the pilot of the vessel and the ruler of the storm be not our friend, willing and able to stand by and succor us, better had it been if we had never launched forth on the ocean of life; most happy if we had long since been overwhelmed by its storms! Who is there that does not feel the need of a friend stronger than man; of fields of happiness, brighter than earth displays; of hopes, stronger and surer than any which life affords? Who is there but would give worlds for that to trust in, which neither time, nor accident, nor human malice, nor death itself could, in the slightest degree, affect, far less destroy?

It is the glory of the true religion that it not only furnishes this anchorage ground, not only provides exceeding great and precious promises, but also inclines and teaches the heart to rely upon them. It enables, nay, constrains the sincere believer to look for his strength and consolation to the care of the Father of the Universe; to the love and compassion of the Almighty Savior, and to the grace and help of the Holy Ghost. Thus faith, in all times of need, becomes reliance, trust, confidence. The eternal and unchangeable world seems like a reality: new freshness and power are imparted to the blessed promises. In the solitude of the closet; in the solemnities of public worship; in the hour of impending calamity, at the moment of utter desolation and misery, this confidence in God is as "an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast." It entereth into *that* within the vail, whither the forerunner hath for us entered. And the heart which hath this hope is comforted; all its anxieties are assuaged; all its fears are gone; all its troubles are removed, and the blessed promise is proved to be true—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is staid on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

When we reflect upon the greatness of the privilege of reposing all our cares upon God, and then think of our own utter unworthi-

ness and nothingness, the question naturally occurs, Will GOD fulfil these promises, in the case of such guilty creatures as we are? Are these great and precious promises for us? Have we any reasonable ground for hope, that in the time of our utmost need, we shall find them true, and realize their divine support?

This is precisely the subject to which it is my purpose to call your attention at the present time. Numberless are the grounds of encouragement for putting our trust in GOD; we shall have time to enumerate but a few; and shall therefore attempt to select the strongest.

1. It is no slight ground that we are shut up to this one only hope; for if, in the time of anxiety, in the day of adversity, and in the hour of death, the LORD of Heaven and earth either cannot, or will not help us, who can, or who will? And as, on the other hand, this thought imparts to all our applications to Him, the energy of despair; so, on the other, it awakens the liveliest hope, inasmuch as no man can bring himself to believe that GOD hath formed him with unfailing resources of hope within, only that he may be forever disappointed.

2. The attributes of infinite power and boundless mercy which, we are taught to believe, reside in the LORD our GOD, in their utmost perfection, afford the most abundant encouragement for us to put our trust in him. No situation can be beset with such difficulties that His wisdom cannot easily devise a way for our escape: none can be threatened with such dangers, or oppressed with such positive calamities, but that his power and mercy can, if he pleases, bring instant relief. The attributes of JEHOVAH, are to the souls of the faithful, like a munition of rocks.

3. But, blessed be GOD, my brethren, we have a more sure word of promise, to which you will do well to give heed. To certain classes and descriptions of persons, He hath engaged, by an oath, that he would give them whatever they ask, in a certain name, and in a particular way. He hath expressly covenanted to give them far more than they are able to ask, or even to think. He hath sworn by Himself, that their "light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for them a far more *exceeding* and *eternal* weight of glory"—nay, that "all things shall work

together for" their "good." If we could be assured that we belonged to this highly favored class; that we did truly ask in the right way, through the all-prevailing name, I am quite sure that our imaginations could not conceive of language more appropriate, more rich, more eloquent, and every way more full of consolation, than the words of the promises of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. The Christians who first heard and received them, were often known, as well they might be, to sing songs of exultation and joy in their dungeons, whilst smarting under the terrible effects of scourging and chains; nay, they were sometimes heard to say that they always,— even in bonds, imprisonments, and deaths,—that they always triumphed in CHRIST; and in truth they were taught such an uncommon estimate of things that one of them has written, "To us it is given"—speaking of it as the highest favor and privilege,—"to us it is given in behalf of CHRIST, not only to believe on his name, but also to suffer for his sake."

4. If these are the *feelings*, the bursts of strong emotions from the hearts of those who have truly been taught to trust in GOD, we may expect a similar strain of wonderful and *triumphant argumentation.* That they could and did argue thus, our text is a blessed example and proof. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how will he not with him also *freely* give us *all things*?" Here are astonishing promises indeed, the love of the Father of the Universe shown, by delivering up his own Son to shame, and suffering, and death, for us miserable sinners. And what a glorious inference this! "How will he not with him, freely give us all things." If this is not divine and transcendently glorious reasoning, then I know not what is. After strictly examining it, must we not admit that GOD has been at infinite pains that we should have strong consolation, we, who "have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us in the Gospel?"

Very briefly, such, my brethren, are a few of the strongest encouragements we have for trusting in GOD. Amid this changeful and dying world there is no other refuge for us; and we have in His character, and in the word of his oath and promise, the highest assurances that he is able and willing to help and to save to the uttermost. Nay, more, He, himself, puts petitions and sargument

into our mouths, which carry along with them divine evidence of their truth and power, and will assuredly, if our hearts employ them, bring down the richest blessings from above.

But, with deepest solicitude may we ask, to whom these promises, and the privilege of trusting in the Most High GOD, truly belong? Do they belong to me? Do they belong to all of us? Are they our birthright? Is there no crime—no course of life by which they can be forfeited? Surely we cannot employ a few moments more profitably than by endeavoring to solve these questions.

It is evident then, I think, that the privilege of reposing undoubted confidence in the promises of GOD, and applying them to our *own* case, does not belong, as a matter of course, to every son and daughter of affliction. For the idea inseparable from a privilege is, that it is not common to all; if it were, how could it be said that some enjoy a distinction or privilege above the rest? It is equally evident that those who never think of the promises; who have no wish for those blessings to which they relate; who never ask them of GOD, or look to them for comfort; can have no shadow of claim to them: such, most assuredly, have neither part nor lot in these things. It is perfectly evident, therefore, that some specification is necessary. And surely none can have so good a right to point out to whom the promises belong, as He who hath been pleased freely to make them. And the diligent student of the Bible will be struck, perhaps, with nothing more than that almost every specific promise—certainly the greatest and best of the promises—are immediately connected with some intimation, or some description or other, of the class of persons, the kind of characters, for whom the promise is meant. Of this the beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount furnish a striking example;—there being remarkable appropriateness in the promise, to the description of character to which it belongs. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see GOD," &c.

In the Epistles the same principle evidently prevails. Who are they for whom all things shall work together for good? even those "who love GOD, and are called according to his purpose." Who are they "whose light afflictions shall work out for them a far

more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" even those "who look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen?" Who are they who may humbly urge the argument of our text, and ask for "all things?" None surely but believers in the sacrifice of CHRIST, and thankful receivers of the benefits of *his* cross and passion!

This course of argument, and the whole tenor of the foregoing discourse, lead naturally to the following reflections:

1. The appropriate, the peculiarly precious promises of the Gospel, belong only to those who are truly sorry for their sins; who sincerely believe the promises of GOD in CHRIST JESUS; to those who daily repair to these promises as the main pillar and ground of their hope and comfort; to those who plead for the fulfilment of these promises, as far the greatest of all blessings; to those who are endeavoring to please GOD in newness of life, and whose most precious hopes and consolations, for time and eternity, are derived from a simple, child-like reliance upon the truth of GOD, in all his gracious promises.

2. If this be true, then the condition of the thoughtless gay, and of the prayerless rich and prosperous, is unspeakably miserable? For, what is youth; what is wealth; what the flush of prosperity; what the spring-tide of life? They are but the sweetness of morning, before the darkness of night—the brilliancy of the cloud, before the bursting of the tempest—the calmness of an Italian evening, before the eruption of a volcano. One of their own prophets, a poet of their own, hath written—

> "What are the pleasures of this life, in sooth,
> A torrent's smoothness ere it dash below."

Then who, if the promises of GOD are not theirs, who shall stand by them, when youth and health are exchanged for sickness and coming death—when prosperity shall, as shortly it must, be succeeded by adversity and sorrow? Who will stand by these wretched, deserted sufferers, when earth is receding from their grasp, and the promises of GOD are not theirs? Imagination cannot conceive a victim of wretchedness more utterly desolate than a lover of the world, torn from all that his heart pants after and

adheres to; whilst the Heavens above him are gathering blackness, and he is compelled to feel to what eternal beggary and wretchedness he has reduced himself, by heaping up treasures upon earth, without a thought of making himself rich towards GOD. Think of this, ye who are now flushed with prosperity, and be persuaded to lay up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come! Think of this, ye whose sense of dissatisfaction and wretchedness already warns you that, aside from the favor of GOD, there is no happiness; and over whose prospects the shadows of disappointment, and the forebodings of approaching death, are already spread? And oh! be entreated to exchange your dross for gold; be persuaded to accept of the promises of GOD for *your* portion, and to live upon them, in humble hope, as your *all in all.*

3. To draw these remarks towards a conclusion, let us, my dear Christian brethren, diligently examine into the evidence of our being the children, and the heirs of GOD'S gracious promises in JESUS CHRIST; for if we can settle the point that we are in our hearts truly sorry for our sins; that we steadfastly believe the promises of GOD, and desire nothing in comparison with an interest in them; if we do rest upon them, and daily plead them, with our covenant-keeping GOD, and cleave to them as to our last hope, and only refuge; then it matters exceedingly little what forms of sorrow haunt our imaginations, or mar our present peace; it matters, too little to be thought of, what difficulties or discouragements beset our path; "for if GOD be for us, who can be against us." "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how will he not with him also freely give us all things."

It will not do for our doubts and fears to rise up alarmed, and say—such blessings can never belong to creatures stained with sin as we have been: such promises cannot be the portion of such wayward, ungrateful, and unprofitable servants as we are. It is no such thing. The promises are for the unworthy, the guilty, and the miserable, provided they are only, at the same time, the penitent, and the sincere.

The saints of old doubtless felt and said just what you now say and feel; and yet which of them was not the special care of the

unchangeable JEHOVAH. What, if the fulfilment of his promises was long delayed;—his oath and his faithfulness never changed. Moses was forty years old before the predictions and wonders attendant upon his birth seemed to be even in the way of their accomplishment. And then how was it at first? disaster and exile!—exile of another forty years continuance was the result of the first striking event which marked his life. Yet he was patient all these long years, for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible. "He esteemed the reproach of CHRIST greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, because he had respect unto the recompense of reward." Be not depressed, then, humble believer, "The LORD is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness." For "He seeth the end from the beginning," and through the darkest and most disastrous hours is steadily aiming at the good of all those who trust in HIM.

Why then, beloved friends, do we so often have occasion to rebuke ourselves for unbelief? Why are we so slow to take the promises as ours? to apply them to our own case, and to live upon the precious things which they provide for us? In times past we have come—at least we have tried to come—even to the very feet of Him who hath loved us, and died for us, and to cast our cares upon him. We have felt the insupportable burden of guilt removed by trusting in Him, and in Him *alone*. We resort to him daily, to cast our souls and the souls of our children, and of our beloved friends, upon him anew. And when we look forward through the dark vista of approaching years, anticipate the evils which must befal our children in the latter day, and act over in imagination the last hours of our own suffering lives, what can we do—what comfort can we find, but just to come to the holy and merciful Savior, as we first came to HIM, weary and heavy laden, and to trust him *wholly* for our entire salvation? Are we enabled to do this with some measure of joy and peace? Can we do it with humble hope and holy confidence? Oh! then, if we can trust HIM for the greater, why cannot we trust Him for the less? If we can trust our SOULS in his hands, why not trust the interests of our perishable BODIES to his care? If we can find peace, whilst leaning upon his arm, and crossing the cold, deep waters of Jordan, is it not a

shame to us, and highly injurious to Him, if we cannot commit our paltry cares and petty anxieties to his will, perfectly assured "that all things shall work together for our good."

Let the irresistable argument of our text come *home* with *power* to our hearts, and perfectly satisfy our minds that the dealings of the LORD will be merciful with regard to us, all the days of our life. Under every anxiety, and in every trouble, let us reason with our fears, and say, "He that spared not his only Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how will he not with him also freely give us all things."

POWER AND EFFICACY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

A Sermon

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Ezekiel xi. 19, 20.—"*And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances and do them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.*"

FEW subjects have been more obscured and injured, by the injudicious and unauthorized remarks and representations of its friends, than a change of heart wrought by the power of the HOLY GHOST, and making the followers of CHRIST new creatures. This, indeed, might have been expected from the unenlightened and fiery zeal of some of its advocates, especially when the difficulty and the extreme delicacy of the subject is considered. When the operations of the mind on ordinary subjects are spoken of, great obscurity and confusion often result from the unavoidable imperfection of human language: it being in the nature of the case impossible to speak of spirit, in other words than those which are strictly appropriate only to matter. And this is even more obviously the case when the subject of mental operations and emotions, is religion; a subject in itself of an elevated and spiritual nature; and which has suffered far more than any other from the disadvantage of being treated of, in words not strictly or adequately appropriate to its delicate, hallowed, and spiritual exercises and sentiments.

But although these difficulties are such that vast allowance ought, in all fairness, to be made for them; yet they by no means proceed to an extent seriously to embarrass the diligent inquirer; much less to throw the subject beyond the field of legitimate and fair investigation; or to render the truth illusory or dubious. Very far the reverse. For, when the point of inquiry is substantial matter of fact, it is, comparatively, of little consequence whether it be in the world of matter or of mind. The actual spiritual phenomena of our natures are as demonstrable as those which relate only to the body. In the latter case, indeed, we use words derived from

matter in their plain and obvious sense. But the figurative meaning of these forms of expression, when there is a change of subject from matter to mind, is no less clear and convincing, though it may be somewhat less definite and precise, than the literal meaning. For example: an heart of stone gives me as strong an idea of a persisting, callous, ungenerous, wrong state of feeling, as an hand of flesh gives me the idea of a material instrument which I daily use; and an heart of flesh, when evidently used in a figurative sense, in like manner, gives me as clear an idea of a warm, active, generous, right state of feeling, as, in a literal sense, it does of the great organ of motion to the vital fluid.

Bearing these remarks, on the use of figurative language upon religious subjects, in mind, let us next address ourselves to the immediate object of our present argument, which is—

I. To show that every moral feeling of our hearts is in such a state as to render some change desirable, and necessary.

II. That the expectation of a change to absolute perfection, does not appear to be authorised either by Scripture or by experience:

III. That a change of external conduct evidently does not amount to the thing desired: and—

IV. That the change effected by the Gospel is of that kind, and goes to that extent, which the necessities and peculiarities of the case require: and—

V. Is effected in the most obvious and reasonable manner by the operation of adequate and appropriate causes.

I. Before treating of a change of heart, it is very natural and proper that inquiry should be made whether the heart and affections of men are so wrong, and in such disorder, as to be susceptible of being amended. For, if the point were established, that the motives of the heart were as pure as possible, and the internal, real, moral character of men absolutely faultless, there would evidently be no room for improvement; and all further inquiry into the reality of a change of heart would be precluded.

In what summary method, then, shall we demonstrate the fact, that the innermost motives, feelings, and desires of the hearts of

all men, are far from being pure and good; and that a moral change is desirable? What method more summary and conclusive than to seize the concessions of the very panegyrists of human nature, and to prove, from these concessions, enough for our present purposes? All such eulogists, if they have written much, will be found to have conceded, first, that all history is virtually a record of the foibles, follies, and vices of men; and next, that, however pure the virtuous may pretend to be, they are, nevertheless, inwardly actuated by some secret bad motive. It is believed that no opposer of the scriptural doctrine of a depraved and bad heart, living or dead, could be named, who has not, an hundred times over, either in words or writing, deliberately or inadvertently, made admissions to the above effect. Must not, then, an incalculable number of convincing facts have extorted these confessions from the most unlikely quarters? and must not that be obviously, as well as demonstrably, true, which even objectors cannot speak or write about, without admitting either virtually or expressly? Sustained by this solitary argument, I fearlessly appeal to your candor at once to admit, that human nature is in such a disordered and depraved condition that improvement is manifestly possible and exceedingly desirable.

II. Our next inquiry is, supposing this most desirable change to be amply provided for, under the blessed government of God, whether it may be expected to be instantaneous and entire. An argument from the nature and reason of things, and from the analogies of the divine government, is certainly not the best method of demonstration; nevertheless, it often serves an admirable purpose in predisposing and preparing the mind for demonstration. Reason and analogy, then, are decidedly against such an expectation. Barren and intractable portions of land cannot be instantaneously reclaimed, even by the best possible methods of cultivation. And uncivilized and barbarous hordes, cannot, by any process of civilization, be elevated, at once, from their condition of wretchedness. So far as we know, all ameliorating processes are, of necessity, gradual and slow. And there is nothing in Scripture, or in experience, to show that the moral benefits of Christianity, either in the case of nations or individuals, are dispensed by any

other law. The apparent operation of these causes, may, in respect to the suddenness of the process, differ very considerably, and the real difference, indeed, between one case and another, may be very great; and yet the general law of a gradual progressive change may still prevail.

I do not speak thus of the turning point, or precise moment of time, when and where the moral changes may begin; but I speak complexly, and generally, of the change as a whole. And the Bible, experience, and observation, constrain me to believe that no good man was ever made perfectly good in a moment; indeed that no perfectly good man (save the LORD JESUS CHRIST alone, as far as HE WAS man) ever did exist upon earth. And I am, therefore, constrained to believe that the moral change, for which the LORD of the whole earth hath made ample provision in the Gospel, is not, in strict propriety of speech, either perfect or instantaneous. In looking for a changed man, then, we must not be looking for a faultless and perfect man; and in seeking for evidence that there is a reality in the moral change sometimes wrought by the influence of the Bible, we are not to look for a change which leaves no room for further amendment.

III. What, then? it may be asked—is this change superficial, apparent, external only? a change from being notoriously vicious and bad, to being outwardly strict and exemplary; from living in the indulgence of personal and social vices; to a most pure and blameless moral deportment? This question is easily answered by another; does a change of outward deportment necessarily involve a change of the inward feelings and motives of the heart? Is it not possible for a man to cover up the basest principles and designs, under the graces of a moral and attractive exterior, just as he can hide many personal defects by his attitudes and his dress? If so, then a change of heart, as the very form of expression itself implies, is far more than a mere change of the outward conduct.

IV. This brings us to a nearer inspection of the real nature of a change of heart. And, to make the point more abundantly clear and convincing, some of the disorders of our moral natures will be recounted, both as it regards ourselves, our fellow creatures, and our moral Governor, and then the inquiry will be, whether the

Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ contains the moral power of correcting these disorders; or, in other words, of changing our hearts in these several respects.

1. I am persuaded that it is but too apparent to every one of you, that your impatience, irritability, pride, and passion, miserably impair and prevent your own happiness. In other words, that every man is his own worst enemy—far the worst. That he might be contented, cheerful, and happy, notwithstanding the frailties of his body, the disappointment of his hopes, and the afflictions and trials of his lot; if it were not for the wrong feelings, which live, and rule, and scatter wretchedness through all his inner man. His restless ambition; his inordinate love of money; his unreasonable anxieties; his feverish, unfounded hopes and fears, constitute the real secrets of his dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Upon looking thus into your own bosoms, must you not at once admit, that any power which could regulate these internal disorders; dissipate the illusions under which you are sensible that you are led astray; correct what is inordinate and wrong; and purify what is unholy and bad, would be as welcome as the creative voice of the Omnipotent, in speaking life and harmony out of the dreariness of chaos; and the change that would follow would be as great, and real, and glorious, as that change which did attend the utterance of that creative voice? This power is faith in the ever blessed Son of God.

2. Are the inward feelings of our hearts towards our neighbors any better, or more under control, than those which have respect to our own immediate personal happiness? Are there, amongst us, no unholy strifes and emulations; no envious or slanderous thoughts; no covetings and hatreds; no feelings of malice or revenge? Whilst there are, how utterly impossible it must be that men should live in quietness and peace together; or that they should enjoy any real satisfaction in their own bosoms? From whence come party contentions and bitterness, wars and fightings; come they not hence even of the wrong and sinful feelings of the heart? From whence come theft and rapine, lying and chicanery, backbitings, strifes, and murders; do they not spring as naturally and spontaneously from a bad heart as water

from a fountain? And let me ask, if by any means men could be brought always to tell the truth, to deal with honesty, and to do to others as they would have others do to them; above all, if they could ever be brought to do good to those who despitefully use them and persecute them, to love as brethren, and to pray for their persecutors and enemies; whether such a revolution in all the natural propensities and strong passions of our natures would not deserve to be called a change of heart, a new birth, or even a new creation? Could any forms of expression, indeed, suffice to describe so great a change? And yet this the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST has often done, and is daily doing; and we shall see directly that HE who designed that it should effect this change, implanted in it a power vast enough to produce it.

3. But the true secret of all the other faults and disorders of our moral natures evidently lies in our not having right feelings toward GOD, our most holy and rightful moral Governor. Who is there that habitually refers all his actions to the will of GOD? Who, before he acts, thinks of asking, not what is agreeable to himself, or what will exalt or benefit him amongst his fellow earth-worms, but what is acceptable to GOD; what is well pleasing right, and in HIS eyes? And yet, though so few act as if the eye of GOD were upon them, and they strictly accountable to Him for every thought, and feeling, and desire, it is perfectly evident that no one can be sure of feeling and acting always as he should, unless he is in the habit of referring his actions to the will of GOD; and scrutinizing his motives, as they appear in His sight. Here it is, at the very source and centre of the motives of action, that every thing in the moral nature of man not only appears out of place, but positively sinful and wrong. Self-indulgence of any and of every kind appears most sinful of all, when regarded in the true point of light, as being an abuse of the gifts of GOD; as tending to the confusion and destruction of social happiness; as precipitating the ruin of the slaves of passion, when GOD willed their happiness. Lying, stealing, oppression, wrath, revenge, assume their appropriate hues of guilt, when regarded as breaches of the benevolent and gracious laws which our Creator hath placed as the safe guards of the best interests of his creatures; and therefore

are even less injurious to society than they are odious and offensive to the holy and good GOD. And surely the grand disorder of our moral nature; the forgetfulness of GOD; the dislike of his wholesome restraints; the hatred of his holy requirements; the idolatrous preference of self gratification, of honor, wealth or pleasure, to his favor; is that grand master-sin of the soul, which brings along with it the deepest degradation and misery, because it entails His sorest curse; and is that disorder which must, in the very first instance, be set right, before we can even begin to do as we ought. Here, therefore, it is that the inconceivable force of the Bible motives is brought to bear. This is the mountainous difficulty which JESUS CHRIST came to remedy and remove. Here it is that GOD places his healing touch; or rather, manifests his new creating power. The heart has new and right feelings implanted in it towards GOD, and towards His Son JESUS CHRIST, through faith in His name, and by the power of the HOLY GHOST. Herein the vital essence of the new birth consists. Herein the promise of the text is fulfilled. "I will be their GOD," is the new relation formed; the immediate result is "the giving of a new spirit;" and the fruits are, that "they walk in his statutes, and his ordinances, and do them." Thanks be to GOD for his unspeakable gifts; immortal praise, for the new creating grace of his Spirit!

V. The only point which remains to be discussed is, whether there is remarkable fitness in Bible considerations to produce these great and most desirable changes. That there is, might have been inferred from the benevolent design of the Gospel, and from considering who is its Author; it being self-evident that our Moral Governor would not have provided a religion for a race of beings alienated from him, without infusing into it a power to restore them to his service and his favor. And the same result comes to us abundantly attested by observation: exceedingly bad men have been made radically better by the Gospel, but never by any other religion; never by any other moral influence. But it has, throughout this discourse, been my aim, not so much to bring forward the strongest arguments, as the plainest exhibition in my power, of the real merits of the case before us. And I shall, therefore, proceed to make my appeal to your understanding and your hearts,

by asking, whether constant reference to the kindness and love of the Savior, in parting for a time with the enjoyments of Heaven, and consenting to humble himself to be made man, and to die for us upon the cross, would not possess power beyond all other considerations, to correct all that is evil and depraved in the heart of man? What sin of the human heart would any reasonable person wish to retain or cherish, if he were all the time standing near the cross upon which his dearest friend, and that friend the ever blessed Son of GOD was dying for his sake? Could he in such a place be puffed up with pride, or be misled by self-love, or indulge discontent and murmuring under the allotments of ALMIGHTY GOD? Impossible. All the base, inbred secret passions and desires of the heart of man, perish when the Cross of CHRIST is in view! Neither can the malevolent or wrong feelings of our heart towards our fellow creatures, any more than their inward and selfish feelings, bear the light which beams from the face of the crucified JESUS. Falsehood, deceit, anger, malice, revenge, appear insupportably wrong in the presence of the most meek, forgiving, and bleeding Savior. Nor is there any manner of sinful feeling or action towards our fellow beings which does not receive an insupportable rebuke, and an absolute death blow from the tender words and pleading actions of the Son of GOD, when he died for transgressions not his own, and died praying for his enemies. And, surely, if ever the alienated thoughts and feelings of rebellious creatures are made to rush back towards GOD, in the full tide of overflowing sorrow, thankfulness, and love; it must be when, for their sake, and for their salvation, He gives up his dear, his only begotten Son, that "whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." When the heart is once prostrated, and thoroughly pervaded by a sense of the love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, from that moment it begins to love what GOD loves, and to hate what he hates. And then it is that the GOD and Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST regains his lost supremacy in the hearts of his creatures; which is, as I conceive, the new birth; and which therefore is the very thing intended in the glowing prediction of our text.

I have scarcely time left, my dear hearers, to turn to you and

ask whether you do not often feel humbled and distressed, and sometimes seriously alarmed at the power which your depraved and sinful feelings have over you; whether it does not seem to you most unaccountable and unmanly that you should find it so easy to break your most solemn vows and engagements, and so hard to keep the slightest good resolution? whether the frequent and numberless instances of your pride, duplicity, anger, and unkind feelings, do not sometimes distress you greatly, and make you feel that the thraldom of your sins is deeply degrading and wretched? And when your thoughts hurry to the confines of the dead; when you think of leaving your houses and lands, your business and your pleasures, your friends and your companions; when, in imagination, you stand before the bar of GOD, in order to give account of the deeds done in the body; do you not shudder to own to yourselves that you are not fit to die; not fit to stand before an holy GOD; not fit to enter through the pure portals of the better world? If not fit, what is the reason? Is it not that your hearts are evil, and need changing? But how can they be changed? when will they be? Who will do the great, the benevolent, the all-important work for you?

Have you ever asked these questions with intense interest and feeling until now? Do you so ask them even now? Would to GOD I could hope that you did, for then my reply would be given with a sense of satisfaction and joy, never felt before in all my ministrations amongst you. Then should I speak to you of a throne of grace, satisfied that you would go there to pray for the blessed influences of the HOLY GHOST. There should I point you to a Savior, and repeat some of his gracious promises, convinced that they would be to you words of life and joy.

But whether you feel as I could wish or not, I cannot dismiss you without expressing the profound conviction of my mind and heart, that you are very depraved, and very unhappy, and must remain so—nay, must be growing daily worse and worse for ever, until you are born again; and that nothing can make you better; nothing can impart true happiness to you, except it be such a view of the love of GOD, in the gift of his Son, to die for you; as shall constrain you to hate and to forsake all that is evil, and to choose

and pursue whatever is well pleasing in his sight. Then, and not till then, will the liberty of the unbound captive—the satisfaction of the cleansed leper—the joy of the reprieved criminal—the generous ecstasy of the reconciled child, be yours. Then, and not till then, will the spirit of the upper world make your heart its temple; and a share of the blessedness of the upper world be given you in foretaste of its perfect and endless enjoyment.

HYMN.

THE SINNER SAVED BY THE POWER OF DIVINE GRACE.

WHAT shall the dying sinner do
That seeks relief from all his wo?
Where shall the guilty consience find
Ease for the torment of his mind?

How shall we get our crimes forgiven
Or form our natures fit for Heaven?
Can souls, all o'er defiled with sin,
Make their own powers and passions clean?

In vain we search, in vain we try,
'Till JESUS brings his gospel nigh;
'T is there such power and glory dwell
As saves rebellious souls from hell.

This is the pillar of our hope
That bears our fainting spirits up;
We read the *Grace*, we trust the word,
And find salvation in the LORD.

Let men, or angels dig the mines,
Where nature's golden treasure shines;
Brought near the doctrine of the Cross,
All nature's gold appears but dross.

Should vile blasphemers with disdain
Pronounce the truths of JESUS vain,
I'll meet the scandal and the shame,
And sing and triumph in his name.

THE RT. REV. WM. WHITE, D. D.,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

THIS Right Reverend Prelate was consecrated in the Chapel of the Archiepiscopal Palace, at Lambeth, in England, on Sunday, the 4th of February, 1787, by the Most Rev. JOHN MOORE, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury. The Most Rev. WILLIAM MARKHAM, Lord Archbishop of York, the Right Rev. CHARLES MOSS, Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, and the Right Rev. JOHN HINCHCLIFF, Lord Bishop of Peterborough, being present, and assisting—and is believed to have been longer in the Episcopate than any Prelate now living.

THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL PULPIT.

SERMON BY THE RT. REV. WILLIAM WHITE, D. D.

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OF THE CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE:

A Sermon

BY THE RT. REV. WM. WHITE, D. D.,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Rom. 12, 1.—"*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of* God, *that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice; holy, acceptable unto* God, *which is your reasonable service.*"

In this epistle, as in others of St. Paul, there is drawn a perceptible line of difference, between the argumentative part of it and the practical. Of the latter, the text is the beginning: and considering the station which it occupies, we may compare a careful reader of the book, arrived at this place, to a traveller, who, having ascended an high mountain, by a road steep and beset with thorns, although not without a clue, looks down on the other side, along an easy descent, to a plain below.

The reason of noticing the transition, is because of the light thrown on the epistle generally, from the terms with which the text opens. There are some, who, by the double error of applying to individuals what is said of the collective bodies of Jews and Gentiles, and of referring to a final state, what has an aspect to Christ's visible kingdom in the present, have raised from this epistle a system accommodated to the favorite view of illustrating the sovereignty of God, without due regard to the no less essential perfection of his benevolence. Were it not, that the interpretation alluded to is here thought a mistaken one, there would be matter of wonder on what principle the inspired author laid down the plain precepts which follow, as an inference from the deep reasoning which had gone before; and especially, with what pro-

priety the mercy of God is looked back to as drawing, by a persuasive violence, to the perfection of Christian morals, which the apostle is hastening to disclose. This is not the case, when we interpret every part of the composition with a reference to the object kept in view throughout the whole of it. In particular, there then appears admirable pertinency in the introduction to the practical part of the epistle.

We have here one of the passages of Scripture, so full of sense and of persuasion, that, for the due efficacy of both, no more seems necessary than the bringing of the different members of the sentence fairly into view. The whole, however, may be the better analyzed, by its being considered as containing,

I. A pathetic introduction;
II. A persuasive motive;
III. A comprehensive duty; and,
IV. An ample commendation of it.

I. First, there is a pathetic introduction—that of entreaty: "I beseech you, brethren."

The precepts of the Gospel are not more accommodated to moral order, than is the manner in which they are proposed to the nature of the being to be swayed by them. It is a property of the human character, that while our fears may be made the instruments of restraining from crimes, it is only by the sense of the excellency of duty, with the hope of its rewards, that we can be animated to the practice of it. The truth of this is conspicuous in the relations of mankind among one another. In civil society, although the magistracy is to be a "terror to evil doers;" and, in respect to persons of that description, "the sword is not borne in vain;" yet it is not the fear of this, but it is the love of social order —it is conviction of its benign influence—it is the sense of an honorable interest in the public weal, which must inspire and cherish the virtues tending to the defence and to the ornament of the state. So, in domestic life, although "judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the backs of fools;" yet it is not by these, but it is by the mild majesty of sage instruction—it is by the sweet voice of affectionate persuasion—it is by the animating encourage-

ment of amiable example, that there must be an incitement to the conduct in the contemplation of Divine wisdom, when, personifying the parent, it makes the affectionate claim to filial duty—"my Son, give me thine heart."

The morality of the Gospel, harmonizing with nature and with providence, although it gives assurance of "tribulation and anguish to every soul of man that doeth evil," with other declarations to the same effect; yet never makes these the sanctions of the lessons which form the Christian character. No, it is in one place —"as though GOD did beseech you by us," and "we pray you in CHRIST'S stead;" it is in another—"I beseech you, by the meekness and gentleness of CHRIST;" it is in another—"I, the prisoner of the LORD, beseech you;" and it is in the text—"I beseech you, brethren." It is by these, and by the like entreaties, that we are animated to the perfection of Christian virtue. In stating the import of this introductory clause of the passage; it is impliedly, and may therefore explicitly be acknowledged, that in its rich contents there is nothing interesting to those, whose minds, to be awed only by an apprehension of the judgments of GOD, are not open to the persuasions of his love; so that if there be any in this assembly, who have no sensibility accommodated to the beauty of holiness, or who contemplate, as the principal privilege of duty over sin, mere rescue from a state of torment; or who have no higher rule of conduct, than what they persuade themselves to come up to the strict letter of the commands of GOD, without much regard to the holy spirit which they breathe; in respect to such, the text may be considered as making a call which cannot apply; as proposing sanctions which cannot move; as delineating a duty which cannot please; and as displaying commendations of it, which cannot allure.

II. Those of the opposite character may consistently go on to the second particular—the persuasive motive which the passage brings before us—"I beseech you, by the mercies of GOD."

The instance of Divine mercy particularly in view, is that which had been the subject of the epistle—the dispensation of love in the redemption: a dispensation, which had been intimated before the giving of the law; had been the end of the law itself; and had been, at last, made manifest by the Gospel: a dispensation, by which

the Gentile converts had been brought within the Church of CHRIST, agreeably to the foreknowledge and the predestination of GOD,—terms which, as used in this epistle, have a reference to that point only; and by which the Jews, although cast off for a while, should be brought in again, and so all Israel, that is, the nation as such, should be saved, or be of the family and flock of CHRIST. It is this dispensation, of which the apostle, just before the text, exclaims—"Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of GOD! For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever, Amen."

There has been this reference to the reasoning of the apostle; in order to show, that the instance of Divine benevolence, especially within his view, is that of its disclosing of an atonement for sin, not to be known but by revelation; and its opening of a prospect of immortality, no otherwise to be claimed than as of grace. This is the ground of the inference of the apostle—"I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of GOD." He may therefore be considered as speaking thus—If there be any value in the gift of Gospel grace; if it be the mean of the highest cultivation of the faculty, which maketh "us wiser than the beasts of the earth, and teacheth us more than the fowls of Heaven;" if the pardon of GOD, as proclaimed in Scripture, have been assured to you by its promises, and sealed to you by its sacraments; if its precepts have been your counsellors in dangers, and your monitors against temptations; if its consolations have been your encouragement in sickness, or in poverty, or in the loss of friends, or in any of the calamities of life; and if its bright prospects have borne up your minds with "an hope full of immortality;" I beseech you by these, and by all kindred motives, to have your ears and your hearts open to the instructive lesson that is to be laid before you. But although this is the mercy, especially within the view of the apostle; the spirit of his affecting motive extends to all the blessings which we receive from an indulgent Providence; and which may well, in allusion to a particular branch of divine benevolence, be called the mercies of GOD; since, considering our imperfections and our unworthiness, they are in a degree the result of that bounty, which "does good to the unthankful and the evil."

With this reference then, the apostle may be heard addressing us again, as follows—I beseech you, brethren, by that watchful providence of GOD, which guards you against seen and unseen dangers; which furnishes you with whatever comforts you possess, of family, of friendship, and of character or success in life; and which supplies every good thing, contributing to your sustenance or to your enjoyment; by these, and by all other, its merciful dispensations; which, unless thus sanctified to their true use, will be abused to the dishonoring of the good Being from whom they come, to the corrupting of your bodies, which should be sustained by them, and to the ruin of your immortal souls; by all these, and by whatever solid good can be derived from them, I beseech you to attend to the duty that is to follow.

III. This duty is the third particular. It is very comprehensive, and is thus expressed—"that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice."

The leading circumstance, is, a reference to a species of offering made to GOD, in virtue of his own appointment; and not, without great guilt, to be profaned to any other use. Accordingly, the apostle, intending to describe the entire sanctification accommodated to the Christian calling, makes an allusion to this expressive rite. The sacrifice mentioned, is that of the body; intended, in this place, of the whole man: the putting of a part for the whole being no uncommon mode of speech, and peculiarly proper here, because of the expression—*present** your bodies a sacrifice. The original verb is appropriated to the act of sacrificing; which, being a material transaction, renders the figure the more complete by an especial mention of the body. It is also to be "a living sacrifice;" to distinguish it from the sacrifices of the law, which exacted the death of the victim; agreeably to the saying of the apostle—"almost all things are by the law purged with blood." But the Christian ritual calls for a living sacrifice; and, except in the case of martyrdom, never requires the death or any less injury of the mortal part of us. That case being out of the question; there is not a precept of Scripture, but what is adapted to the health and

* παραστησαι.

the comfort of our bodies, no less than to the peace and the innocency of our souls. No, Religion, it is not thou; but it is licentiousness, thy wanton rival, who is continually offering up dying victims; not on the altar of GOD, but on that of the foe of GOD and man, who "goes about seeking whom he may devour."

It is a favorite idea of the New Testament, to represent Christian duty under the figure of a sacrifice: the reason of which cannot be fully seen, without a reference to the design and the completion of that mysterious kind of rite.

Without adverting to the sacrifices in the earliest ages of the world, and to speak of the Jewish sacrifices only; we find in them a lively delineation of the Divine person, who, in reference to these awful and instructive types, thus described himself as to fulfil them—"lo, I come to do thy will, O GOD." The New Testament, harmonizing with these prefigurations of the Old, declares their completion in "the one offering made by JESUS CHRIST, once for all;" and by this oblation, boundless as its merits, and ever living as to its efficacy, he is said to have "perfected for ever them that are sanctified." But if this be so, what further place is there for oblation or sacrifice, under the Gospel? The answer is, that, strictly speaking, there is none; and yet, that in a spiritual sense, there is the commemorative sacrifice in the Eucharist, of "the symbols of the body and blood of CHRIST;" this, not in the way supposed by the Romanists, as repeating the one great sacrifice of CHRIST; but only as showing it forth, according to his command. That in this point of view, it partakes of the nature of the subject commemorated, appears from the parallel run between the ordinance, and the legal and the Heathen sacrifice, in the tenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. Beside, the inspired writers consider the doctrine laid down as so leading a truth of Scripture, that they delight in describing the several branches of duty as being also sacrifices; and even our persons as being such; to be made acceptable through the merits of the great sacrifice of all. Thus Christians are called by St. Peter, "a Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD through CHRIST." We are admonished by St. Paul—"to do good, and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices GOD is well

pleased;" in another place, to "offer to him the sacrifice of praise, which is the fruits of our lips, giving thanks to his name;" and here in the text, more significantly than in any of the others, to "present ourselves to him, as living sacrifices."

The propriety of the figure will still more appear, if we consider the nature of the legal sacrifices; which were either eucharistical, as acknowledging the dominion of GOD over his creatures; or expiatory, as representing the true atonement to be made for sin. The representing of ourselves as living sacrifices, beautifully answers to the former; in the acknowledgment which it implies, that we are GOD'S by creation and by redemption; and in shewing our readiness to "glorify him in our bodies and in our spirits, which are his." As to the latter, although the offering of ourselves can no more effect it, than that of "thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil;" yet it involves the application made of the merits of a more noble offering. At the same time, there is this expressive circumstance; that whereas, in the types which went before, the offals of "the beasts slain, were burnt without the camp;" so the rejection and the destruction of those worse offals, our corrupt passions, is essential to the Christian sacrifice in the spiritual worship under the Gospel.

It is then with great significancy, that Christian purity and duty are denoted by the metaphor of a sacrifice; which strongly describes the sanctifying of the whole man to the purposes for which his Creator designed, and to which religion calls him. Conformably to this act of spiritual sacrifice; the powers of our understandings are to be exercised on such objects as are implied in that Collect of our Church, in which we pray, that "by the inspiration of Almighty GOD, we may think those things which are good, and by his merciful guiding, we may perform the same." Our wills and our affections are to be in harmony with that other petition, in which we implore the Divine Being, that "we may love the things which he commandeth, and define that which he doth promise." And in regard to our appetites, those lower properties of our nature, and necessary entailments on it in this mortal state, we may describe its ascendency over them, by referring still to our Liturgy; where it prompts the prayer, that "our flesh being sub-

dued to the spirit, we may ever obey the Divine motions, in righteousness and true holiness."

Such is the Christian sacrifice: and here it is fit that we should severally ask ourselves, whether we have made, or are ready to make, this oblation of soul and body; of heart and action; of temporal existence and eternal. There is no subject, to which there will more pertinently apply the spirit of the address of Elijah to the Israelites, where he tells them—"if the LORD be GOD, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." It is no uncommon complaint against Religion, that she raises a painful struggle between the sense of duty and opposing inclination. The advocate of Religion may join with the complainant, in confessing the misery of such a state. But there will be this difference between them; that while her rival, for the remedy of them, would seduce to "the living without GOD in the world;" and the knowing of no law but appetite, and no object but gratification independently on duty; she, blessed instructress, admonishes us not to silence conscience, but to rise up to its demands—nor to aim at the impracticable work of serving GOD and Mammon; but to present ourselves to the former, a living sacrifice. As an incentive to this, there remains the last particular, which is the commendation given of the duty; as a "sacrifice holy, acceptable to GOD, and our reasonable service."

It is an holy sacrifice; being strictly so called, with a view to sacrifices under the law, which were holy in a relative sense merely, or with a reference to the religious uses to which they were appropriated; whereas the graces involved in the Christian sacrifice, are a real holiness, or rectitude of heart. Being thus distinguished from the sacrifices of old, it is still further distant from every offering of ourselves, or of our devotions, not consecrated to GOD, by a renovation of the spirit. It is, as an holy, so an acceptable sacrifice; being thus also distinguished from the offerings of the law; which, of themselves and independent on suitable dispositions, are declared to be of no avail. But here is an offering, the acceptance of which rests on the truth of the promises of GOD; being secured by the merits of that once dying but now living victim, who made an offering operating to the acceptance of ours, in

the great act by which he offered up Himself. As the Christian sacrifice differs in this respect from the Jewish, much more does it differ from every species of devotion, not attended by the sacrifice of sinful passion. To this, there applies with especial efficacy, the warning—"bring no more oblations;" such "incense is an abomination unto me," and "who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts."

Further, it is a service paid to him to whom it is not only supremely due, but of whom it may be affirmed, that "his service is perfect freedom; being suited to the powers, and the source of whatever contributes to the true happiness of man; and unlike to that of sin, which is an usurpation dishonorable to him, and binding all the powers of his soul in a captivity to sense.

And it is "a reasonable service." It is still said in the way of comparison with the Levitical sacrifices, which were of senseless animals; whereas this is of a reasonable nature. It may also be called a reasonable service, in respect to the fitness of the duties which it exacts. These are no other than submission and piety to God, justice and charity to men, and the temperate government of ourselves: which are the perfection of reason, must have the approbation of mankind, at all times, and in all places; and are indeed a copy of that eternal reason, which is the law of the moral universe.

Such is the commendation given by the apostle of the duty to which he calls us: a duty which thus appears to be of high import; and to require the mortification of opposing passions. Yet, lest there should be discouragement on that account; let it be remarked, that the duty, if it were carried to the height, would be no more than the contributing of our part, to the immense tribute of praise which all nature should be incessantly sending up to her almighty Sovereign. Of the material works of the creation, it is expressively said in Scripture—"they continue this day according to thine ordinance; for all things serve thee." Yes, they continue from day to day, and from age to age, under the mechanical laws to which they were subjected at the creation; proclaiming the Divine hand of their great contriver. But His accountable creatures, are subjected to a moral law. Theirs is a reasonable

service: and it is only by a voluntary oblation of themselves, that they can join in the chorus of the creation. The bringing of us to bear a part in this magnificent act of praise, is the great design kept in view throughout the Christian revelation: which therefore invites us, not to a blind, not to a partial, not to a forced obedience, but to a rational, an entire, and a willing devotion of all our faculties and our affections. This surrender, under the favorite emblem in Scripture, of a sacrifice, is beautifully referred to in that most solemn office of our religion; in which, according to a form handed down to us from very early times, after celebrating the sacrifice of the death of CHRIST, and after offering the sacrifice commemorative of it in bread and wine; we offer ourselves, souls and bodies, to be living sacrifices unto the Divine Majesty. It is a sublime exercise of devotion; and full of edification and of comfort to all those, who thus dedicate themselves, without reserve, to their great Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer.

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ON THE DENIAL OF CHRIST:

A Sermon

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Matt. 26, 74.—"*I know not the man.*"

THE religion of the Cross imparts true dignity and elevation to the human character. It lifts the frail, erring creature, *man*, from the dust, and binds him with a golden link to the great, eternal GOD. Having brought him into this exalted connection, it exerts a regenerating and purifying influence upon his nature, awakens in his soul and engrafts upon his character all that is generous, and great, and good.

This religion spreads a charm over life—bereaves the grave of its terrors, and opens the prospect of future and unending bliss upon the delighted gaze. There is so much that is lovely and valuable connected with the hopes and promises of the Gospel, that if a wish or a sigh could make men Christians, the efforts of the minister of JESUS CHRIST, we doubt not, would be attended with unbounded success, and he would soon see the whole world ranging themselves under the banner of the Cross.

The blessings offered by the Gospel are desired by all, but the terms upon which they are offered are exceedingly disliked. Could men become partakers of the hopes of the Gospel of CHRIST, and at the same time retain their sinful attachments, and be allowed their sinful indulgences, they would glory in the name of Christians. But the very first advance toward the

Christian character consists in an entire and eternal renunciation of sin. The grand object for which the Son of GOD visited our earth —for which he chose for himself out of this world's polluted population a people, was, that he might *save them from their sins, redeem them from all iniquity*, and render them in this respect *a peculiar people.* JESUS CHRIST never did—and never will, save a man *in his sins.* The gate of Heaven will eternally remain closed upon every soul that is not *saved from sin.* Sin must be parted with, abandoned, renounced.

This abandonment and renunciation of sin, is often attended with pain, and temporary inconvenience. It may involve us in great trials, and subject us to numerous sacrifices. Rather than encounter these difficulties, and submit to these evils, many are disposed to disclaim all connection with CHRIST, and say with the unfortunate disciple whose words, uttered upon one of the most memorable and unhappy occasions of his life, have been announced as our text—*I know not the man.*

Previous to delineating those several classes of individuals, who, like Peter, deny CHRIST, I wish to call your attention to the consideration of *the sin of this deliberate denial of the* Savior, and *the causes that lead to it.*

I. *The sin of denying* CHRIST.—We should never lose sight of the fact, that in accomplishing the work of our salvation, CHRIST stooped from an amazing height, and voluntarily encountered labor, shame, danger and death—if *He put on the form of a servant*, it was for our sakes. If *He became of no reputation*, it was to render it possible for us to become the honored sons and daughters of GOD ALMIGHTY. If *He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, it was for our salvation and eternal rescue.

On this very account GOD determined *highly to exalt Him—to give Him a name above every name*, to *have all men honor Him, even as they honor the Father.*—Hence, also, much importance is attached to an open and fearless confession of CHRIST. This confession is indeed laid down as one of the terms upon which salvation is suspended—"If thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord JESUS, and believe in thine heart that GOD raised

Him from the dead, *thou shalt be saved;* for with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." And the Savior himself held out the promise of life on the same terms—"Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, which is in Heaven."

Not to confess CHRIST, is to withhold from him the honor due to his adorable nature—an act on our part fraught with deep and peculiar guilt, inasmuch as it was for our sakes that he disrobed himself of the splendors, and shrouded, beneath a veil of flesh, the majesty, of the eternal GODHEAD.

To deny CHRIST, then, would evince a depth of ingratitude, and fix upon the character a degree of guilt, which no language can adequately express. And the Savior himself hath forewarned us of the dreadful consequence of such a denial. "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven." And St. Paul, alluding to this declaration, joins to it his testimony—"it is a faithful saying, if *we deny Him, He also will deny us.*" But,

II. What are the causes that lead men to deny CHRIST?

Why did Peter deny the Savior?

It was not because he had not witnessed sufficient evidence of *his divine power*, and *his unquestionable claim to the character of a teacher sent from* GOD.

No: he had been one of the most highly privileged of all the apostles. He had seen the eyes of the blind opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. He had seen the loathsome leprosy driven from the body by a single volition—and the chains which demons had rivetted upon the soul, broken by a word. He had seen the lame, at the bidding of JESUS, leap as an hart, and heard the tongue of the dumb to sing. He was one of the three permitted to accompany the Redeemer to the place of his transfiguration, where he beheld his face shining like the sun, and his raiment lustrous and effulgent as the light. He was one of those that stood before the tomb of Lazarus, listening to the voice of the Son of GOD as it echoed through the still and noiseless cells of that subterranean abode, and witnessed the wondrous scene that ensued—that of a dead man starting up and coming forth, at the Savior's summons, attired in grave clothes.

Peter was fully convinced of the Divine character of JESUS. This, on a memorable occasion, he had distinctly avowed, *Thou art the* CHRIST, *the Son of the living* GOD.

His denial of CHRIST was not owing to any want of ardent and devoted attachment to Him—he had forsaken all to follow JESUS, and on numerous occasions evinced the most affectionate regard for him. Such was the ardor of his attachment and the fervor of his feelings, that in the presence of all the disciples, he had most positively assured his Divine master, *though I die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* How little can we calculate when all things go on well and prosperously with us, how we shall feel and act in the dark hour of adversity and trial!

This confident declaration of Peter was uttered in the moment of fervid feeling, when no danger was near.

But now unexpected events had transpired. Things had undergone a great change. JESUS had been arrested upon charges of high misdemeanor, and dragged by a rough band of soldiers, like a guilty culprit, to the hall of Pilate. Under these circumstances, no man could be recognised as his follower or adherent, without encountering danger and disgrace. Hence his disciples all forsook him and fled.

Where now was devoted and magnanimous Peter? What had become of all his high and bold resolves? He is seen *following* JESUS *afar off.* At length he cautiously approaches the place of his master's confinement, and after many misgivings, ventures to enter one of the outer apartments. There a servant "maid looked at him, and said, thou also wast with JESUS of Nazareth, and he denied and said, *I know not the man.*"

The fear of *danger* and *disgrace* seems to have operated most powerfully upon his mind—for his connection with JESUS was insisted upon, at three different times, and at each of those times positively denied, and the last denial accompanied with a solemn oath. This, however, is not a solitary or singular case. Peter has had more to imitate him in his denial of JESUS, than to follow him in his subsequent penitence and contrition. It will be found that the fear of danger or disgrace—an unwillingness to suffer or submit to sacrifices for CHRIST, are among the most prominent and frequent causes that lead men to deny the Savior.

III. CHRIST *is denied by his followers in numerous instances and in a variety of ways.*

1. Where the general characteristics of Christianity do not appear in their conduct.

Soon after the resurrection, when two distinguished disciples were brought before the Jewish Sanhedrim, we are told, that the persons constituting that judicial assembly, *took knowledge of them, that they had been with* JESUS.

No man who *has been with* JESUS, can have intercourse with the world without imparting to all around him a knowledge of this fact. The mechanic no sooner discloses, by those ten thousand little allusions and associations, his calling; nor the man of law his profession, than the Christian, by a subdued and chastened spirit, a meek and heavenly temper—desires, hopes and expectations, that constantly look away from this sublunary scene to the eternal world—a soul that seems imbued in all its thoughts and affections with the very sentiments that animate the seraphic host around the throne—and by a strict regard in all his conduct to the will of his Heavenly Father—the fact, that he *has been with* JESUS. The spirit which animates, and the maxims which govern him, are altogether different from the spirit which animates, and the maxims which govern the world.

He acts from the steady and fixed principle of *right*—the world, from the steady and fixed principle of *interest*. Consequently on a theatre like this, where *interest* is the great moving principle, and where so many interests are continually conflicting, the man, who in all things is governed by the changeless principle of right, will doubtless have to submit to sacrifices. In a world like this, where there is so little relish for holiness, and where the very name of GOD and Heaven strikes upon the ear like a jarring and inharmonious note, it is no wonder if he, whose conversation is in Heaven, and whose every word breathes of hopes anchored in the eternal throne, should be looked upon as a strange and singular character—and should become the butt of ridicule and the subject of derision among the frivolous and profane.

If, therefore, a man kneels at the altar, and there vowing eternal allegiance to the Savior, does not, when he leaves that altar,

carry along with him into the world the spirit of CHRIST, and the maxims of his pure and holy religion for the regulation of his conduct, his deportment will soon show it. If earthly objects have the ascendancy in his affections—if this world's favor and its gain be the things to which he principally looks, the distinctive marks of Christianity will be no longer discoverable in his character—and on his doings will be written, in broad and legible lines, *I know not the man*,—I know not JESUS of Nazareth.

2. *Worldly conformity*, in those who profess to be the followers of CHRIST, is a direct denial of him.

Unhappily for the cause of CHRIST, there are not wanting in the Church, at the present day, instances of men *who have left their first love*—of individuals, who set out in the Christian path with fervor and engagedness, but have speedily turned aside, and gone back to the very spirit and round of worldliness that formerly distinguished them. The worst feature in their case, however, is that they think they are still Christians.

The class of persons to whom I refer, pursue the vain and empty things of the world with the same avidity—are equally infatuated with its pomp and pageantry—and are just as ready to sacrifice principle and duty, when they stand in their way to wealth, distinction, and pleasure, as their unrenewed neighbors, who lay no claim to the Christian character. In all their deportment, conversation, and pursuits, there is such a constant reference to things present and temporal, that it is abundantly evident that the world and its favor are the supreme objects of their thoughts and affections.

And yet once it was far otherwise with them. Once they knew no happiness comparable to that of sitting at the feet of JESUS, and waiting to feast upon the smiles of his countenance. Then, in the ardor of their attachment to the Savior, with Peter they would have exclaimed—"though I die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." Yet now such a worldliness sits upon all their actions that no one would imagine that they had ever been with JESUS.—In the awful dereliction, stamped upon their conduct may be read in letters of sunbeam—*I know not the man.*

They did not go all these fearful lengths at once. Their

apostacy was progressive and imperceptible, of which they themselves were almost unconscious. Peter at first followed JESUS afar off. Then he faintly, and with evident compunction, denied Him. But at last—such is the progressive and continually augmenting force which sin acquires—he boldly affirmed, and that with an oath—*I know not the man.*

This is the history of thousands. They begin with the neglect of some known duty. Perhaps it is prayer. The Christian who is not a man of prayer may expect to fall—may calculate with the utmost certainty upon growing cold and careless. The Most High has promised His heavenly grace upon the sole condition of prayer. Prayer is the food upon which the soul subsists, the wings with which the Christian flies to Heaven. Take away this food, and the divine life expires—take away these wings, and the believer no more visits the celestial court—no more beholds the face of his heavenly Father—no longer loves the place of his habitation. Prayer is the means by, and the medium through, which we commence and carry on an acquaintance with GOD,—the act by which we acknowledge CHRIST as our mediator. The neglect of it, therefore, is a virtual denial of Him—a tacit declaration to our families and children that we *know Him not.*

Observe the character of that man who, day after day, retires to his rest and rises from his couch without lifting up his thoughts in devotion to GOD. Though a professed follower of CHRIST, no one would imagine it from any thing discoverable in his conduct or conversation. An entire worldliness, an apparent utter forgetfulness of GOD, is stamped upon his whole demeanor. His course on to this fearful and far gone alienation was gradual and progressive. With the neglect of prayer he began to grow more familiar with sin. At first he tremulously approached the line that separates right from wrong; drawn by passion or allured by pleasure he crossed that line, designing immediately to return—but around him gathered pleasures more fascinating, and still more fascinating. By little and little he yielded to the soft and alluring blandishments of sin—the world by degrees acquired a higher and higher ascendancy over his affections—the thoughts

of GOD came less and less frequently into his mind—the glorious image of CHRIST began to grow dim—and the salvation He wrought diminished in his view—till at length, in this downward progressive course, all love to the Savior expired.

Ah, have I not been narrating the history of several individuals in this very assembly? They went on by imperceptible degrees. The chains that bound them were invisible, and the hand that rivetted those chains, unseen. Had they, however, in the beginning, heeded the voice that warned them of danger—had they been less self-confident, less self-presuming—had they been more watchful, more conscious of their need of divine assistance—had they looked more frequently to GOD for guidance and direction, and kept more closely at the feet of the Redeemer—the world would never have gained such an ascendancy over their affections, nor led them into a train of doings which have ten thousand tongues, all clamorous in the declaration—*I know not the man*, I know not JESUS of Nazareth. If any such fallen Christian be now within these walls, let him remember the unaltered and unalterable decision of the Savior—"whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven."

3. *They who profess to be followers of the Cross, cannot depart from the exalted standard of morality exhibited in the Gospel, without denying* CHRIST.

In Him resides supreme legislative power. He has enacted various laws for the regulation of our conduct. Every act of injustice, every deviation from strict rectitude, every delinquency in moral duty, every aberration from the path of holiness, is a direct infraction of those laws—and every such infraction speaks with deep and tremendous emphasis—*I know not the man*—I acknowledge not his authority—I submit not to his government.

4. *Again:* CHRIST *is denied by the coldness, apathy, and supineness* of many who *profess to be his followers.*

They, in whose hearts the principle of divine life exists in freshness and unimpaired vigor, are distinguished by their devotedness to the Savior—their zeal and engagedness in the extension of his kingdom—and their tender anxiety and deep solicitude for the salvation of their fellow men. They imbibe his sentiments, and

become animated with the same spirit that glowed in his bosom. He was all activity—His love for perishing sinners was boundless —His estimate of the worth of the soul can be gathered from the emphatic and eloquent inquiry—"what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul—or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" To understand the full import of this inquiry, behold him expiring on the cross, pouring out his life in bitter agony, to rescue the immortal soul from death! Now they who profess to be his disciples, and neither feel nor manifest any deep interest in the beings around them that have been ransomed by his blood—they who do not stand forth and actively engage in some efficient operation—put their hand to some powerful moral enginery, designed and fitted to reclaim those beings from error and death,—by this very inaction and manifest indifference proclaim to the world, in language most unequivocal,—*I know not the man.*

5. *They deny* CHRIST *who are merely nominal Christians; refusing to honor Him by cordially embracing the offers of life, and observing the institutions of the Gospel.*

This description embraces a large class of individuals. For we live not in a *Pagan, Jewish* or *Mahometan*, but in a *Christian* country. The Christian religion is the religion of our fathers; most of us have been brought, in early infancy, within the Christian covenant, by the kind solicitude of our parents. Even from that early period, the elementary principles of the religion of the Cross have been instilled into our minds, and the proof of its divine origin placed in every attitude and aspect before us. We are convinced of its truth, and have a theoretic knowledge of its doctrines, and the terms upon which we can be saved.

But something more than this theoretic knowledge is necessary. Man must "believe with the *heart* unto righteousness." The ordinances and sacraments of the Gospel must be received, before any substantial evidence can be furnished of a sincere and honest intention to follow CHRIST. I appeal then to you, my hearers; have you in very truth embraced the overtures of mercy held out in the Gospel, and taken JESUS CHRIST for your Lord and Master? I am addressing numbers, who in infancy were brought to

the baptismal font, and solemnly consecrated to GOD. Frequent opportunities are furnished them, in the apostolic rite of Confirmation, and in the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to declare their approbation of what their parents did for them in infancy—to declare that they are not ashamed of the Cross of CHRIST—that they are desirous of renouncing sinful habits, and commencing a life of holiness.

To neglect these opportunities—to pass by that solemn rite —to turn one's back upon that celestial banquet, is nothing short of an open and contemptuous denial of CHRIST.

Will you then, Oh, inconsiderate hearer, place the seal of contempt upon your parent's prayers and kindness—and avow that your holy dedication in baptism was a *useless, unmeaning* thing? Will you abjure your religion, set GOD at defiance, and say of your Savior—*I know not the man?*———You know not JESUS!——— *Your parents knew Him!*———and probably I am addressing some whose parents are no more. In their mortal hour JESUS stood by them and smoothed their dying pillow.—— Then as their eyes were closing in death——they sent their last sigh——their last prayer to Him for you. *That prayer* was heard: hence the ten thousand warnings that have been brought to your ear—the kind and constraining motives that have been continually held out to win you to his service. And yet—after all these—you are ready to avow, *I know not the man!*

Where—oh where shall I find colors to paint this ingratitude? The tears and prayers of dying parents disregarded—the kindness and entreaties of a dying Savior despised—his overtures of mercy rejected—His religion abjured—Himself disavowed, and all knowledge of Him disclaimed!

6. *They deny* CHRIST *who refuse to confess him before men.*

Although an empty profession will save no man, that disposition which leads men to withhold from the Savior the honor of publicly professing belief in Him, indicates a state of feeling hostile to his cause.

In reference to the subject before us, we are so situated that we can find no neutral ground on which to stand—our acts will either deny CHRIST, or proclaim us Christians. The Savior himself

has declared—"He that is not with me, is against me." *To be with* CHRIST, is to profess his name—to embrace the principles, and practice the duties of his religion. Whoever does not profess his name—embrace the principles, and practice the duties of his religion, *is against Him*—is saying to the world, *I know not the man.*

And who does not tremble to think of the vast number that stand thus arrayed against CHRIST?

Among this number, perhaps, is one who acknowledges the Bible to be the word of GOD—is conscious that if he should seek salvation he would obtain it—admits that GOD is now calling upon him to repent—and that to put off for a single day the work of reformation, is running a tremendous risk. This man sees and admits that he is a perishing sinner, and would fain fly to the foot of the Cross for safety, but for the principle that prompted Peter to deny CHRIST. He is surrounded by a circle of friends whom he holds in high esteem, and from whose society he derives much enjoyment. These friends, valuable as they are on account of their social qualities, are altogether men of the world, and place an exceeding low estimate upon religion. Their opinion of him would be instantly lowered should he take up the Cross—and, therefore, he does not—he will not take up that Cross. No: he will grieve the HOLY SPIRIT—slight the invitations of mercy—repel all our entreaties—shake off his convictions—and, though the bleeding Redeemer stands stretching his arms toward him, will openly avow, *I know not the man*, rather than suffer or submit to sacrifices for CHRIST.

Have I drawn the character of any individual in this house? Are there no lines in it resembling yours, my young friend? When the minister of GOD pressed upon you the kind and constraining motives which the Gospel furnishes to lead you to CHRIST—when he drew aside the curtain that shuts out eternity from human gaze, and the appalling spectacle of death with his tremendous scythe passed before you,—the eternal judgment seat rose to view—you beheld all nations gathered around it, and didst recognise yourself in that great assembly, shrinking away from the piercing, the all searching look of the Judge Eternal!—

why was it that tears then trickled down your cheeks, and the signs of deep emotion sat upon every line of your countenance? Ah, you then resolved to become a Christian.

But on the morrow, when you came in contact with the world —when its bewitching smiles were again spread before you, and your gay and thoughtless companions again clustered around you, all your firm resolves melted away, and your conduct from that time to the present has told the world—has told wondering angels —has told CHRIST, who will be your judge, *I know not the man.*

Others there may be, of less religious sensibility—who go not so far in conceding to the truth of Christianity—who are not avowed infidels, but whose notions upon all religious subjects are loose and unsettled. These men unblushingly declare that they know nothing of CHRIST, as a Savior. Strange anomaly! That men should live in a world ransomed by the blood of a Savior and know nothing of that Savior! That a divine and glorious Being should come from Heaven to save them from death, and they should spurn his offers, and avow that they *know him not.*

Are there any such unhappy individuals in this audience? With what language shall I address them?——— *Ye know not the man!!*———Doubtless ye have heard of his lowly birth in Palestine. Ye have heard how he was buffeted and spit upon—how he was condemned, while Justice all the time cried—*I find no fault in him,*—how he was led around in mock majesty, having a reed in his hand, and a crown of thorns upon his head, and the clamorous mob shouted "*crucify Him, crucify Him!*" Have ye not seen him bearing on his shoulder the cross up the steep of Calvary—then nailed to that cross—and at last bowing his head in agony and death? Then the earth shook—the graves yawned—the rocks burst—and the sun hid himself! But all these indications of terror are not half so awful—all this contumely heaped upon the guiltless head of the Son of GOD, is not half so impious and heaven daring, as your cool and continued denial of the Savior!

Two reflections here forcibly present themselves.

1. If the train of reasoning pursued in this discourse be conclu-

sive, every individual to whom CHRIST is made known that does not immediately embrace his offers of life, and enter upon the duties He enjoins, is guilty of the sin of denying Him. It will then follow, that every individual in this assembly that is not in very deed a Christian, is daily denying his Savior. *This is one reflection.*

2. *The other* is—that these individuals who are thus denying their Savior are travelling as rapidly as the wheels of time can carry them to the tribunal of Him whom they are denying, and who has solemnly declared—"whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, which is in Heaven."

Ah, in the eternal world you will know JESUS—and know Him not as a Savior, but as a Judge! The look that He cast upon Peter, after denying Him, was a look of love—but *it* melted his heart into penitence—shot conviction through his soul—and sent a freezing chill over his whole frame. If such be His look of love, what will be His look of wrath! how wilt thou, impenitent man, meet Him in the eternal world, clothed, as thou must be, with denials of Him as with a garment!

Peter said "I know not the man—and the LORD turned and *looked*—on Peter." Thou hast said, and art by all thy conduct still saying, *I know not the man.*

In that day—that great, tremendous day, "the LORD will turn and look upon thee"—and in his look thou wilt read thy destiny.

In that mute and speechless look thou wilt see enough to rive thy very heart. How will the recollection of the denials of thy LORD—of his goodness despised, and his long suffering contemned, then rush upon thy thoughts! Ah, how will thy heart then sink within thee—and thou look around in wild dismay for rocks to fall upon thee, and mountains to cover thee, from the presence of GOD and the LAMB!

Make not the awful experiment--but this instant fly to the presence of CHRIST—and own Him as your LORD and Savior.

ON THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD:

A Sermon

BY THE REV. SETH B. PADDOCK,
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Proverbs xv. 3.—*The eyes of the* Lord *are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

The omnipresence of God is frequently asserted in Scripture, and may be clearly proved by reason. It is not so properly a particular attribute, as the assemblage of many attributes of infinite extent. It is that universal property by which he communicates being to all things, knows all things, upholds all things, and directs all things.

All creatures are the work of his hands. As no power can act where it is not, God must be in all places, because he acts in all. My Father worketh hitherto, says our Savior. Not a seed sprouts, not a creature is brought into existence unless God be present to give life and being. In calling things from nothing into existence, and disposing of them in such a manner that each might work for the good of the whole in the universal dominion, God must necessarily have looked through from their beginning to their end, and consequently known all possible events. The effects of bodies moving, whether by fixed laws, or by the instinct of animals, or by the will of intelligent creatures, were provided for in the counsels of eternity. The gentlest motion, even that of the air, known only by the sailing of the thistle's down, if unforeseen and its effects unprovided for, must have endangered the whole system, and completed, long before this, the destruction of the universe. But known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Not a sparrow falls to the ground, not a hair of our head is disturbed without his knowledge. Evidently the Being who knows all things, and whose knowledge is underived, must be present with all things. Whither can we go from His Spirit, or whither can we flee from his presence? Heaven and earth are full of Him.

God, who created, and who knows all things, still upholds them

by the word of His power. Without His protecting hand, the heavens would now pass away with a great noise, and the earth and the works that are therein would be destroyed. All things, each moment of their existence, depend on Him for preservation. Not a second breath could we draw, unless He were here to deal out another, as the present one passes away. Not a step could we take, unless he supplied us with new strength as the former was exhausted. In Him, all creatures live, and move, and have their being. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth. Thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled. Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. It is hardly necessary to observe that the Being who supports all, must be present with all.

GOD also is the disposer of all events. He has provided for the effects of every motion of body, and of every act of His intelligent creatures, whether lawful or unlawful, in such a manner as he foresaw would answer some wise purpose in his government of providence or grace. The latter acting freely, are justified or condemned, according as they obey or disobey his laws, but the action, though *opposed* to his will, is made in the issue to further some gracious end in his administration. For he compelleth even the wrath of man to praise Him. Whether we live or die, whether we are visited with prosperity or with adversity, whether with health or with sickness, it is GOD alone who directs. Not that the conduct of man has no influence upon these events. Both Scripture and experience assure us that the happiness or misery of man depends much upon himself; but it is by the enforcement of that law of Heaven which ordains that certain acts shall ordinarily produce certain effects. A man's heart deviseth his way, but the LORD directeth his steps. Each of these prerogatives proves that GOD must be omnipresent.

And how majestic, awful, and glorious a Being must He be! Who can meditate upon this perfection without exclaiming with Zophar, "canst thou by searching find out GOD! Canst thou find out the ALMIGHTY unto perfection? It is high as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than

the sea. There is nothing to which we can liken the immensity of GOD." "The earth is a point; the ocean a drop;" the universe an atom. Imagination looks with astonishment over the rolling worlds around us, and with self gratulation on the reach of its powers; but when attempting to scan the boundless extent of GOD'S immensity, it is startled at the discovery of its shortsightedness, and with humility exclaims, "such knowledge is too wonderful for me;" it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Nay! the highest exalted angel cannot say, thus far extend the attributes of GOD, and no farther. Neither height nor depth, neither length nor breadth can measure them. How ought the contemplation of this subject to humble us under the mighty hand of GOD! Mankind, on viewing their possessions and superiority to many of their fellows, are too apt to feel, that they themselves are gods. Forgetful of Him who made them to differ from their brethren, they say, at least in heart, my hand and the might of my wisdom and power have gotten me these advantages. They practically deny that they are stewards of GOD, bound to promote His glory with the talents in their possession, and claim that as these talents are the reward of their own exertions, they have a right to dispose of them as they will. But let them measure themselves with the ALMIGHTY, and reflect that it is He from whom they have received all, who requires their obedience, and that He is present to take cognizance of their conduct, and will hold them responsible at the last great day, and their proud imaginations will be brought down. They will discover that the distance between them and the lowest of their race is altogether imperceptible, when compared with the distance between them and their GOD. Keeping this discovery in mind—and no man can be so insensible to his littleness as to exalt himself against GOD, or be puffed up by a consciousness of his superiority to his fellow men—he will be meek and lowly in spirit, looking upon all the family of Adam as his brethren, and ready to receive and practice that instruction, which is able to make him wise unto salvation.

The omnipresence of GOD should cause us to fear exceedingly the commission of sin. "We can never sin with security, but in a place where the eye of GOD cannot behold us. And where is that place? Had we a mind to escape his inspection, whither

should we go? Heaven is the seat of his glory, creation the scene of his providence, and the grave itself will be the theatre of his power; so that our efforts will be equally vain, whether we ascend or descend, or fly abroad upon the wings of the morning light. The arm of the ALMIGHTY will still at pleasure prevent, and be ready to arrest the fugitives in their progress. Darkness may, indeed, conceal us and our deeds from the sight of men; but the divine presence like that of the sun, turns night into day, and makes all things manifest before GOD."*

Bear in mind then, brethren, that GOD is ever with you. He is with you in your families: observing your tempers, disposition, and conduct, and whether in obedience to Him you are bringing up your children in his nurture and admonition, or suffering them to go thoughtlessly on in the broad road which leadeth to destruction. He is with you in your retirements. He withdraws with you to your chambers, and compasseth about your beds, watching whether you are glad, and willing to shut the world from your minds, when no longer necessarily connected with it, or whether you still meditate upon it, and trust in it, as your portion, your happiness, your GOD. He is with you in your employments. He enters your studies, seeing whether you are seeking that wisdom which cometh from above, or only that wisdom of the world, which is foolishness with him. He goes with you to your farms, marking whether you are most diligent to cultivate the earth which he has given for *your* use, or the heart, which he has required you at the same time to cultivate for *His* use. He accompanies you to your merchandize, noticing whether you depart from truth and honesty, or whether you do unto all men as you would they should do unto you. And does He, my brethren, think ye, behold you with indifference in these several situations! No! He observes all your doings and all your goings, that He may check your evil propensities, overrule your wicked deeds for the accomplishment of his own purposes, and that every mouth may be stopped, and himself justified, when he comes to judge his people, and pass sentence on the impenitent. His eyes are in every place,

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* Home.

and, as they are too pure to behold iniquity without begetting in Him a resolve to pour out indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon the perpetrator, always remember that it is an evil, and will prove a bitter thing to sin against the LORD. The omnipresence of GOD is a copious source of encouragement and comfort to the righteous. The eyes of the LORD are in every place beholding the good. He notes down in His book of remembrance the silent aspirations of their hearts, the deeds of charity which are done in secret, the good purposes which perish without coming to light, and the sufferings visible to no eye but his own, which they endure for CHRIST'S sake.

He beholds the good to *do* them good. He defends them from the ten thousand enemies which lie in wait for their souls. He pours the balm of consolation into their wounded spirits, in their troubles. He supplies all their wants, spiritual and temporal. He makes every event subservient to their best interest. He enables them to do and suffer cheerfully whatever he appoints to them, saying to them, "fear not, for I am with thee," "be not dismayed, for I am thy GOD; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Though it is appointed unto them, in common with others, once to die, though their spirit must return to Him that gave it, while its companion, the body, must moulder in the grave, or be spread abroad on the wings of the wind, yet will the eyes of the LORD see, and his power preserve and collect every part for a joyful resurrection, and an indissoluble reunion with the soul. What servant of GOD can reflect upon these things and ever be tempted to think it is in vain that I serve him. What servant of GOD can reflect upon these things, and not be happy, in any situation in which Providence may place him? He is as certainly under the eye and protection of GOD, as if he were the only being in the universe upon which he exercised his watchful care and benevolent affections.

The omnipresence of GOD should remind us of the gratitude due Him for His patience toward us, and for the gift of His Son. We cannot mingle with society without perceiving that the world lieth in wickedness. We cannot look into our own hearts without perceiving that there is much which does not often meet the public

eye. And yet owing to our blindness and partiality, we "see but in part." How exceedingly sinful, and almost beyond number, must our sins be in the sight of GOD, whose eyes are in every place? Without experience, who could imagine that so pure and just a Being would for a moment suffer such an abuse of His mercies, contempt of his authority, and defiance of his power? Yet GOD has not only spared us, but loaded us daily with his mercies. He has not only delayed to cut us off in our sins, but "provided a ransom" for us in the person of His only begotten Son. The mercies given us in him exceed all human computation. Had he so far removed our condemnation as to suffer us to sink down into endless sleep after this life, who, on contemplating the penalty incurred, would not have felt that he is justly bound to love him with his whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. But the purpose of GOD in CHRIST JESUS could not be limited to a negative blessing. He determined to raise us "from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; to remove from us all things offensive to Him, and fit us for the enjoyment of His glorious presence: to deliver us from hell, and admit us into the kingdom of heaven. Let these blessings be the subjects of our contemplation, adoration, and thanksgiving, day and night. Let us more closely examine our ways, and search our hearts, that we may more and more admire and adore the long-suffering of GOD in bearing with us, and his goodness in giving his Son to die for us, and let both have the designed effect and lead us to repentance.

If GOD be omnipresent, let us remember that he is in his holy temple. Veils of flesh and blood alone conceal him from our view. Could we open the eyes of our spirit, we should see Him as He is, a Spirit, filling the temple with his majesty. We should see JESUS CHRIST fulfilling his promise, and standing in the midst of us who are now gathered together in his name. Around him we should see the seraphim standing and covering themselves with their wings, in token of their unworthiness to appear in his glorious presence. With what lowliness does it become us, who are so far removed from their purity, to come before him, to implore the pardon of our numerous offences, and the continuance of his favors. Did we see things as they are, we should each exclaim with the prophet, "woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of

unclean lips, and yet mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of Hosts." Great and glorious LORD GOD command one of thy seraphim to fly to us as he flew to him; bid him touch our mouths as he touched his, with "a live coal from off the altar," and in this day of grace and mercy, let him say to us as he said to him, "lo! this hath touched thy lips and thy iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Then shall our souls bless thee, and "all that is within us shall bless thy holy name." Then shall we no longer honor thee with our lips, while our heart is far from thee, but shall worship thee in spirit and in truth. Then, whatever thou callest us to do, or to suffer, we shall say, dispose of us and deal with us, LORD, according as seemeth to thee good.

And let us, my brethren, "take heed how we hear;" GOD is present to notice the reception which his word finds in our hearts. When Moses gave the law to the Israelites, they feared greatly and trembled, because sensible that they were in the presence of their GOD. They saw his lightnings and heard his thunderings, and scarcely had he begun to promulgate his laws when all hearts were united, and all Sinai echoed with one voice, saying, all that thou hast spoken, we will do. Let us remember that GOD is here, and addresses us through his holy word, as certainly as he did them; that we stand before him as guilty creatures, seeking pardon, as blinded creatures seeking light, as ruined creatures seeking salvation. Let us, therefore, never depart from his holy temple, and forget what manner of persons he has declared us to be, and what we must do to inherit eternal life. Let us always enter it with a spirit of reverence, of penitence, of thanksgiving, of devotion, and of attention, fully realizing that GOD is here. Let us always leave it, bearing some new portion of grace, some better established doctrine, some clearer view of duty, some new desires after heaven, some firmer resolution of forsaking our evil ways, and of returning to our GOD, some increased anxiety of redeeming the time that is past, by meeting him in future with hearts less polluted by sin, and more devoted to his glory.

Let us, in short, not only here, but every where, remember that the eyes of the LORD are in every place beholding the evil and the good, and let our whole conduct be regulated with a view to the account which we are to render.

THE

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SERMON BY THE RIGHT REV. NATHANIEL BOWEN, D. D.

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ON THE OFFICE OF DEACONS IN THE CHURCH:

A Sermon

BY THE RIGHT REV. NATHANIEL BOWEN, D. D.,

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Deuteronomy x., 8, 9.—"*The* LORD *separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the* LORD, *to stand before the* LORD *to minister unto him, and to bless in his name. Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the* LORD *is his inheritance.*

ONLY a short time had elapsed after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, when Moses received the commands and instructions of JEHOVAH, relative to the tabernacle, its structure, furniture, services and ministers. In evidence of his will to all ages and generations of men, that all things appertaining to his immediate worship and service should be held worthy of their sacred regard and care, GOD himself thus, in the minutest manner, originally prescribed them, and established them to be observed *by an ordinance for ever*. And when all things were prepared according to the instructions which Moses had received in the Mount, and the Tabernacle was reared and furnished, Aaron, according to the same instructions, was solemnly invested with the Priest's office; while the sons of Aaron, Moses also annointed, as he did their father, that they too might *minister with him in the Priest's office; whose annointing was for an everlasting Priesthood, throughout their generations.*

The whole tribe of Levi, distinguished by their purity from the pollution of the idolatry with which the rest of the children of Israel had corrupted themselves at the foot of Sinai, were afterward set apart from the nation, by an express command, to serve in the inferior offices of the sanctuary; *to minister unto Aaron the Priest*, (as the language of the original command concerning

them is) *to keep his charge and the charge of the whole congregation, to do the service of the Tabernacle.*

Thus, under the authority and guidance of a particular revelation, were the officers of the ancient Church of GOD established: and thus established, the constitution of the Jewish Church, although varied at some periods of its history, in circumstances of inferior importance, continued until the *fulness of the time was come*, essentially the same. Then, the appointed period of its duration having expired, it, with the whole economy to which it belonged, was abolished; and all its glory absorbed in the brightness of his glory, who was *the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

This constitution of the ecclesiastical part of the Mosaic economy, thus established in the wilderness, and afterward transferred to the temple on Mount Zion, has seemed to many pious and learned men to have been a pattern, after which was formed the constitution of the Church of CHRIST. The language of the age immediately succeeding that of the apostles is, "as were Aaron and his sons and the Levites under the law, the like let the Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons claim to be under the Gospel."* And with the venerable authority of this early age, thus to sanction it, we may safely entertain the persuasion, that the striking analogy of the constitution of the Church of CHRIST to that of the Tabernacle, was not merely an accidental resemblance; but designed by the all-wise author of both these institutions, as an interesting expression to all men, of the unity of the dispensations of which they were severally the depositories. It might be the divine purpose, that through the identity of character and design, in this as in other respects, pervading a system of things extending through so many ages, men might be induced to confess and adore *Him* as its author, whose wisdom alone could be adequate to such an effect, and thus be led to CHRIST, *as the Alpha and Omega of the whole, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.*

In the text, the office of the Levites and its duties and condition

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* St. Ignatius.

are particularly presented to our attention. It will accord with the character of the interesting solemnity before us,* to endeavor to illustrate it, with a reference, chiefly, to the corresponding inferior office of the Christian Ministry, to which our attention is, on this occasion, peculiarly called.

FIRST. *The* LORD *separated the tribe of Levi.* It was not by human authority that they, more than those who held the higher departments of the Jewish Ministry, were invested with the office which they bore. Moses in their case, as in that of Aaron and his sons, did but execute the express command of the most high GOD. *The* LORD *himself separated them to his service.*

In the same manner, Christians, we are to adore the authority of heaven in the appointment of inferior as well as of the higher orders of the ministry, under the dispensation *which came by* JESUS CHRIST. CHRIST committed not the original organization of his Church to the mere arbitrary will or unassisted wisdom of men; nor has he left the general constitution, which by the direction and authority of the HOLY GHOST sent upon the apostles at the first, he gave it, subject to alteration by human vanity or caprice. *He*, by this divine agent, at the first, *gave some Apostles, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints and the edifying of the body of* CHRIST. *Go ye into all the world*, said he to the twelve, when he had come from the grave, *and preach the Gospel to every creature, disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the* FATHER, *and of the* SON, *and of the* HOLY GHOST—*teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.* Here, then, is the Son of GOD himself clothing the first ministers of his word and sacraments with his authority; and in their persons addressing the promise of his presence, government, and care, to his Church, in all the ages that should follow. In fulfilment of his gracious promise, we accordingly believe him, although absent in the body, to have been present by the Spirit, with his apostles, in all their

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* An ordination of Deacons.

counsels and proceedings. And in fulfilment of the same promise, we believe him still to be ever present, to *direct*, *approve*, and *bless* all that, according to the example and authority of his apostles, is done for the right government and edification of his Church. Having this assurance we need not, and we do not, acknowledge mere human authority as the source of the powers with which the ministers of CHRIST, as such, are clothed. He who ruleth in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, is more especially present with his Church, to superintend all its interests and concerns. It is he by whom the ministers of that Church are invested with the authority they exercise, and by whom all their work is done that is profitable to his glory—and having this assurance, the Church permits not any to be received even into the lowest order of its ministry, without the solemn recognition on their part, of the divine will and influence in the transaction. They must declare that "they trust they are inwardly moved by the HOLY GHOST to take upon them this office."

There is in this language, nothing that can be supposed to countenance, in any degree, the conceit of extraordinary sensible impulses from the Spirit, creating preachers and ministers of the Gospel by an instantaneous communication to minds before the most uncultivated, and hearts before the most depraved, of the powers and feelings necessary to the character. It simply implies the reasonable requisition, that all who would obtain part in this ministry, should be ready, in the sight of the Searcher of hearts, to declare themselves humbly persuaded, so far as men can be persuaded concerning the motives of their conduct, that the motive which influences them to take upon them this office, is worthy of the sacredness of its design and character, and such, consequently, as cannot but be ascribed to that HOLY SPIRIT from whom alone "all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed," viz: the love of GOD and man sincere, ardent, firm; filling them with a solicitude for the happiness of the one, and the glory of the other; and prompting them so to desire to advance the interests of both, as to be willing to spend and be spent in the service of the Church and Gospel of the Son of GOD. When therefore any persons, thus sincerely persuaded, and otherwise duly qualified, present

themselves for admission to this ministry, and are set apart to it by prayer and the laying on of hands, then, as really as he did those whose case is represented in the text, *the* LORD *may be said to separate them to stand before the* LORD *and minister unto him.* For it is the spirit of the LORD by which "the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified," that moves them thus to dedicate themselves to his service. It is the LORD who by the same spirit matures and brings that desire to good effect; and it is the LORD by whose authority *they* act, who invest them with the badges of his service.

SECONDLY. *The* LORD *separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the* LORD, *to stand before the* LORD *to minister unto Him, and to bless in His name.* It were unnecessary, even would the time admit of it, to enter into a minute consideration of the particulars which are here stated as comprised in the part assigned to the Levites in the services of the ancient sanctuary. It is sufficient to observe, that the duties belonging to them under all previous administrations, as well as the modifications and enlargement of them made by David, when the Tabernacle had given place to the temple worship, all denote a sacred office, and that distinct from that of the Priests, and inferior, and subject to it.

The same things are true of the office of Deacons in the Church of CHRIST; theirs is an ecclesiastical office, distinct from, and auxiliary and subject to the authority of others. Every testimony by which a judgment can be formed of the nature, relations and duties of ecclesiastical offices, in the first ages of the Church, imposes upon us this persuasion. Their solemn separation at the first from the whole body of the brethren, by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the apostles, denotes the sacredness of the functions to which they were devoted. Philip, in the exercise of the authority thus imparted to him, we find preaching and baptizing; and Paul himself plainly, as we see in the chapter to which the words which have been read to you belong, represents Deacons as an order of ministers, by his instructions addressed to Timothy, respecting their character, conduct, and manners, in the same part of his epistle, which contains similar instructions for those who are invested with distinct and higher offices. In the age immediately

succeeding, we find Deacons expressly inhibited from secular business, as being an order of men holy to the Lord;* and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find in the writings of this period any mention of this office which does not plainly designate an office, apostolically instituted, of the Church and ministry of CHRIST.

The variations to which the functions of this order of the Christian ministry have been subject in different periods and places, do not, in any degree, affect the evidence of the fact we are asserting. Through all those variations, every thing essential to this fact remains apparent; that Deacons were ordained by prayer and the laying on of the hands of a distinct order of ministers, to whom this duty specially appertained, that under *their* authority and subject to *their* direction, they exercised the ministerial functions of baptizing, reading, and assisting at the celebration of the worship and sacraments of the Church.†

In conformity, then, with the example of all primitive antiquity, the branch of the Church of CHRIST, of which we are members, declares it to *appertain to the office of a Deacon, in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Priest in divine service; and especially, when he ministereth the holy communion; to read the holy scriptures and homilies, in the Church, and to instruct the youth in the catechism; in the absence of the Priest, to baptize infants; and to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop.*

THIRDLY. The text having declared the *nature*, proceeds to represent the will of heaven, with respect to the *condition* of the office of the Levites. *Wherefore Levi hath no part or inheritance with his brethren.* Called out from among the people, the tribe thus dedicated by the will of JEHOVAH to his own immediate service, were separated from all their common pursuits, and deprived of all the honors or profits, which either the judicial or regal government could confer. So, too, they whom GOD calls into the service of his Church, in a sense essentially the same, are

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* Cyprian's Letters.

† All questions relating to the office and duties of Deacons in the Church may be found stated and discussed in Bancroft's Survey of the Pretended Holy Discipline.

called to a renunciation of all part and inheritance with their brethren. Of all its stages and degrees alike indeed, as well as of that which is on this occasion peculiarly in our view, this language represents the true condition. The pomp of power, the splendor of worldly distinction, the pride and pleasures of life, are not for the ministers of CHRIST. It is, however, the *first* step in this holy warfare, which constitutes emphatically the renunciation, which the text may be considered to describe. The same hour which witnesses, and the same ceremony which seals the dedication of any to CHRIST, as his ministering servants, witnesses and seals their consent to have henceforth no participation with the rest of men, in the common pursuits and interests of the world, or in any of the objects of merely secular interest and care. Shameful dissemblers were they with GOD were it otherwise. If, of all the professors of the religion of the Son of GOD, it is true (and who shall dispute the truth of what he has himself declared?) that they cannot serve two masters, the world and him, with how much greater force will this declaration apply to them who devote themselves to the work of his sacred ministry! In the duties of that ministry, there is enough, (nay, how much more than enough, let them say who have arrived at life's farthest verge, in the most diligent and assiduous discharge of them,) to employ all their time, all their solicitude, and all their powers. They may acquire much knowledge of the oracles of GOD, and yet know them very imperfectly and unsatisfactorily. They may have dealt out much of the bread of life, and yet to the last see many more around them hungering for it than they can feed. They may rejoice in the assurance of having many souls to present at the last to the LORD, as the seal of their fidelity, yet mourn and weep for numbers whom they could not induce *to come to* CHRIST, *that they might have life*, passing into eternity with no interest secured in the salvation of the Cross. Can they then presume on the privilege of sharing their affections, their labors, or their time, between the things of their master and the world? Oh no! they know that no such privilege belongs to the service, to which, by the most solemn of engagements, they are bound. They know that neither their commission includes, nor the nature of their ser-

vice will admit it. That none ever come to take upon them this office with the solemn declaration on their tongues, that they "trust they are inwardly moved to do so, by the HOLY GHOST," while their hearts are divided between its objects and those of secular pursuits and desires, we would not venture to assert. With the depravity of the heart of man there is scarcely any thing impossible, and instances, even of this hypocrisy, the most odious that the mind can conceive, there may be registered among the subjects of "the wrath that shall burn like fire for ever." But, instances of this must be, and for the honor of our nature, let us presume they will always be but *rare* exceptions to the general holiness of intention with which men enter into the service of the sanctuary. It were oo daring an impiety for the most hardened, and too serious for the most thoughtless profligacy often to commit: and you must seek another explanation of that want of a sufficiently undivided interest in the objects of their calling, which, in all ages, the Church may have had more or less to lament in her ministers, than that which resolves it into motives unworthy at the begining, of the pure and exalted nature of her service. You must recognise in it, a melancholy evidence of that infirmity of fallen man, which, amid the trials, necessities, and temptations of life, often renders his best and holiest purposes ineffectual, or the sad effect of the relaxation of that holy vigilance which, in all conditions alike, is indispensable to the integrity of human virtue.

If, however, we must confess, on the one hand, an inconsistency sometimes to mark the lives of the ministers of CHRIST, with the holiness of the purpose for which they are separated from the world, yet must it, on the other, be declared of them at large, that as it is their lot to have no part or inheritance with their brethren, in the honors, profits, and pleasures of the world, so they are cheerfully content to have none. Even where considerations of human expediency may have united the ecclesiastical with the civil state, and annexed high distinction and emolument to some of its departments, even there, unless the state of the Church be utterly corrupt, honor and affluence can actuate comparatively none to enter into its ministry. At the stations in which these are found, but few can hope to arrive; and thousands must devote themselves to the

laborious work, the toil ending only with their days, of the service of CHRIST, with no higher expectation than that of being scantily and grudgingly provided with the things needful for their sustenance. No. The cupidity with which the enemies of Christianity have delighted to reproach its ministers, can move none to enter into a calling, out of which, the purposes of such a temper can so much more readily and effectually be answered; and the ignoble ambition into which an ignorant malignity would explain the zealous enterprise or learned assiduity of those who have been early distinguished in the service of their divine master could, here, but defeat and disgrace itself. A worldly minded ambition, an ambition unworthy the Christian, because incompatible with the love of GOD and man, which must regulate all his views, and influence all his conduct, would seek another sphere than this. It would choose the world for its field; where ignorance can so readily be duped, or knavery bribed, into its views. In the Church, it were too base a motive for the favor indispensable to its object; and stripped of its disguise, would be soon abandoned to the scorn and disgrace it merited.

But, my brethren, whatever coloring other circumstances may afford for the alleged worldliness of the views of Christian ministers, it is certain those of their condition in our quarter of the Christian world, are calculated to secure their motives, at least from any such reproach as this. Here, little, indeed, is the part or inheritance they have with their brethren. Here obscurity and poverty are their lot—poverty in many places, absolute and almost extreme; in others, comparative indeed, yet poverty justly so called, while limited to the provision barely adequate to the decent necessities of the present, their most favored condition admits of no reservation for the increased necessities of the future. While, then, such is the condition of the ministers of CHRIST, yet is it a condition at which they feel they are not to repine; nay, by that very authority which has ordered their condition as it is, they are forbidden to murmur or repine at it; for it assures them, as in the last clause of the text, *the* LORD *is their inheritance.*

FOURTHLY. This language, in its original application, is sufficiently explained by the laws of the Levitical code, making provision

for the Priests and Levites; and by the honor to which, as the immediate attendants of the Divine presence, they were admitted. In the same manner is the LORD the inheritance of those, who, in the sense we have been considering, renounce, for his service, all inheritance with their brethren. *Do ye not know*, says St. Paul, *that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the* LORD *ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.* This illustrious apostle himself, and those who first trod with him the wine press of the vineyard, might refuse to be partakers of this privilege, and suffer all things, *laboring, working with their own hands*, as his language is, because, with the miraculous powers given them, and the extraordinary presence and existence of the HOLY GHOST, their work could not thus be hindered, or have its usefulness diminished. By their authority, however, the right of the ministers of CHRIST to support from those to whom they minister, is unquestionably established. Behold, then, here their inheritance which cometh of the LORD. On their brethren, with whom, in other things, they have no part or inheritance, sacredly rests their charge. The obligation is as obvious as any other of the Christian profession; and the faithful followers of the Savior can never either question, evade, or be impatient of it. If, however, amidst a general insensibility among those who name the name of CHRIST, to the things which his law demands, his ministers ever are, as in some circumstances they are, denied the care and support their office claims; yet have they, in a nobler sense, an inheritance of the LORD, in the honor* of waiting on him in the courts of his house, and ministering there to those who shall be heirs of his salvation. However the ministers be esteemed in the world, think not we idly magnify our office, when we say it has an appointment that is of heaven; it is an important branch of the

* "GOD chose Levi for this separation before any other tribe, for Moses' sake: whom he would honor by advancing the house of his father to the highest pitch of dignity that mortal man could attain to. For what greater honor than to be the ambassadors of the LORD of Hosts, to be admitted to the inspection of his most sacred mysteries—to be GOD's κληρος, his proper and peculiar portion! Would to GOD they either knew or believed this, who think their house disgraced and their blood stained, if any of their kin become of the Clergy. It was not so, in GOD's opinion."—*Mede's Discourses.*

glorious plan of grace concerted in the councils of heaven, for recovering fallen sinners to glory, honor and immortality. Shall it not then be honorable in our eyes? If the Levites were honorable because GOD had separated them from the people, and brought them to him, to do the service of the Tabernacle; if under a dispensation so much inferior in excellency and glory, it were better and more honorable to be a door keeper in the house of the LORD than to dwell in the secure and high places of human strength and pride, how much greater dignity must belong to their office, of how much greater honor must they be thought worthy, in the eyes of angels and the spirits of the just in heaven, and all the righteous and the good upon earth, who faithfully minister in the latter house, and serve the altar of the Son of GOD? Yes! Ambassadors of GOD, and messengers of his grace to guilty men, fellow workers with him in making ready a people prepared for his coming, great is the honor with which, at his hands, they are clothed. *If the ministration of death written and engraven on stones was glorious, which glory was to be done away, how shall not the ministration of the* SPIRIT *be rather glorious? and if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth doth exceed in glory!*

It is another sense of the language of the text applied to the ministers of CHRIST, that they have an inheritance of the LORD in the moral happiness with which it is of the nature of their work to reward those who exercise it with fidelity. They who thus faithfully wait upon the LORD, are the chosen, however humble, instruments by which heaven dispenses its best and choicest blessings to mankind. Ministers of the reconciliation, which JESUS died upon the cross to effect, of heaven with earth, it is the great purpose of their calling to bring their sinful and unhappy fellow creatures to peace with themselves and GOD, and thus aid them to acquire fortitude for the trials, consolation for the sorrows of the world, and how to meet even with death itself with equanimity and joy. If then, they behold the blessing they have implored resting on their labors, rich amidst all their poverty, is *their inheritance of the* LORD. If then, as instrumental agents of the spirit of grace, they have planted the seeds of holiness and peace in the hearts of men, tended the springing blades, and watered them with

the tears of solicitude and love, they see heaven crowning them with increase, must not their hearts be glad? If, when they have faithfully labored, by example, and word, and persuasion, and all the means proper to their office, they see the fruits of their labors in the increase of the practical efficacy of religion, or if they have seen the spirit of the desponding sinner revived by their instrumentality, the proud offender arrested in his progress to perdition, and humbled at the feet of JESUS; if they see GOD, by their means, adding to the Church such as shall be saved, if they have been employed by him to carry his effectual consolation to the afflicted, and light up the flame of hope and joy in the bosom of the dying; if thus it should have been the pleasure of heaven to bless the work committed to their hands, in the increase of the faith, the virtue and the happiness and peace of their fellow mortals, then have they an inheritance of the LORD, more valuable than all that for it they have renounced, preferable to all that the world could have conferred.

But great and real as may be the happiness rising from this source, to those who minister in the sanctuary of the Redeemer, yet it is often balanced by sorrows inseparable from their calling. At the utmost the success of their labors can be but imperfect; and in the relapse of some, whom they had seen turn to GOD, in the insensibility and indifference with which others may hear the word of GOD at their mouth, in the successful hostility of a proud, a profligate, or insidious infidelity, even in their sphere of appointed labor, seducing and leading captive the minds of many, and substituting its gloom and desolation, for the cheerful and peaceful hope which Christianity inspires; or dangerous error of religious opinion insinuating itself to the spoiling of the minds and conduct of those for whom they had prayed and labored, that they might continue in the faith as the Church has held and taught it, grounded and settled in these, and other circumstances, they find the Cross which they, like their master, must bear before a gainsaying and unfriendly world. Yet, have they abundant compensation for even these severities of their condition, in the assurance that the LORD is their inheritance in heaven: who, if they are *faithful unto death, will give them a crown of life.* We trust and believe, my brethren, that the ministering servants of the LORD in general, are able to make full proof of this consolatory assurance; and amid the

worst and most painful circumstances of their condition, amid all their privations and afflictions, to say with the apostle, *none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the* LORD JESUS, *to testify the Gospel of the grace of* GOD. At least, we trust and hope, they labor so *to approve themselves to* GOD *faithful stewards of his mysteries, rightly dividing the word of truth*, as to have hope toward GOD, that he will accept them at the last; and for their poverty give them the treasures of his kingdom; for their sorrow, the joy that they have who stand before his throne in heaven, and for their obscurity on earth the glory *that is at his right hand for evermore.*

In dwelling on this part of the subject, I have hoped to suggest some grateful and animating reflections to the minds of those, who are now to be separated by the LORD to stand before the LORD, and minister unto him, are about to renounce all inheritance with their brethren. My young friends, the most solemn and important hour of your lives is at hand. In a manner the most awful that human wisdom could devise, you are about to devote yourselves to a work the most important that human life can know. By a vow, which CHRIST himself stands ready to witness and record, you are going to dedicate yourselves to him, in the near and important relation of his ministers, until death shall discharge you and send you to render up your account in heaven. These views of the business before you, we have no doubt, without this suggestion of them, are present in all their solemnity to your minds. The season of your preparation for this sacred service, has been passed in a manner sufficiently honorable to you to forbid any apprehension that you do not well understand and feel the solemn and momentous purport of the obligations which you are going to assume. Yet, in the spirit of affectionate solicitude, as well for you as for the cause with which your lives and characters are in future to be connected, I cannot forbear to to avail myself of an occasion, the circumstances of which are so well calculated to enforce and give efficacy to advice, to address to you a few words of exhortation.

It were a pernicious error, then, let me say to you, my friends, to suppose that the years of this inferior ministry may be well

enough passed, if care be taken, merely to provide, before they expire, for a compliance with the letter and form of the increased requisitions, with which the Church will meet your demand to be admitted to the higher departments of her service. Yet this is an error to which you will, in various ways, be tempted. Early popularity, and the warm approbation and applause of partial friends may lead you to attach more than their just importance to acquisitions already made. The fascinations of general literature may lessen your relish for the laborious and unfashionable reading, much of which is indispensable to your future respectability and success; and the pleasures of society, (of which it is amiable to be fond,) may have, in the condition of life in which your lot is cast, a power to which more time must be sacrificed than it is possible for you to spare, without injury to yourselves and injustice to your master's work. Resist then, we beseech you, these and all other temptations that may peculiarly beset this interesting season of your life, and consecrate it to the studies and exercises which are necessary to your future usefulness and honor. Let the period of your service in this outer court of the sanctuary, in which you will be free from the cares and toils for others, which, when the pastoral relation has once been instituted, will throw high obstacles in the way of a due attention to yourselves, either in heart, or mind, or life, be regarded as your golden opportunity of improvement, as well in all the virtues as the knowledge, proper to the character you will have assumed. Resolve, we beseech you, and supplicate without ceasing, the aid of the spirit of grace to make the resolution effectual, that the expiration of that probationary stage of your ministerial life, shall not find you unprovided with any principle of conduct necessary to the true spirit and intent of your calling, or any acquisition in the knowledge it requires, which in that period, might have been attained. We do not, however, recommend this early diligence to grow in professional knowledge and virtue, as the means of lessening the burden of a more advanced stage of the ministerial course, and preparing the way for an easy life hereafter; but that the increased burden of its more advanced periods, may find you strong enough to bear it. All its stages alike, it becomes us ingenuously to assure you, are full of care and labor. Once enlisted in this warfare, you cannot put off

its armor but with your strength to bear it, or with the tabernacle of the body itself. Forbidden to encourage you by expectations which your experience would disappoint, we must represent the life before you, as all a life of toil, anxiety and conflict. We cannot withhold this representation of it, through any fear of discouraging or depressing you; for could the prospect of its difficulties discourage you, you were unworthy the honor of the service of the LORD.

Superior, then, to any discouragement from the prospect of its inconveniences, and guarded against the temptations peculiar to your condition, be diligent during your present, and prepare for a faithful, an able, and effectual future ministry. Learn above all things, to love and delight in your calling, even in the humblest offices of this its humblest degree, as that which has the Savior of the world for its author, and for its objects the present instruction, consolation, and peace, and the salvation and immortal happiness of your fellow men. Forgetful of yourselves, your honor, your interest, and all present reward of human favor, dwell in habitual, fond meditation on your master who is in heaven, and the souls which he would make you instrumental of bringing to his joy. Study the doctrine of CHRIST. Endeavor to learn it practically yourselves, and the task of teaching it to others will be at once, more easy, more pleasant, and more honorable. Strive so to incorporate it with your own experience and the whole system of your affections and feelings and life, that out of *the abundance of the heart* your mouth may always speak, what it may appertain to your office to utter.

Are these hard sayings? They contain only that without which you cannot be useful or happy in this office; without which you cannot have the present favor and approbation of the master into whose service you will profess to have entered, or his acceptance or reward, when you shall stand before his presence at the last.

By laying these, and all other things which appertain to a faithful, an useful and honorable ministry in the Church of CHRIST, effectually to heart, it is *our earnest desire and prayer to* GOD *for you*, that *having used the office of a Deacon well and purchased yourselves a good degree*, you may have an inheritance of the LORD, rich and abundant; that having finished the work CHRIST had given you to do on earth, you may receive its reward

in heaven; and *that having fought the good fight, and finished your course and kept the faith, you may find a crown of righteousness, which the* LORD, *the righteous judge, shall give you in his day.*

My Christian brethren of this assembly, as members of the Church of GOD, and friends to human happiness, and the cause of religious truth and virtue, the occasion claims a peculiar interest in your feelings. In circumstances which admit of few encouragements to it, beside those arising from its own interesting nature, you see before you, candidates for the ministry of CHRIST. While every other walk of life presents inducements so much more powerful than this affords, what can be more grateful to the Christian, than to behold any, however small their number, thus choosing, rather to suffer affliction and poverty with the ministers of GOD, than to seek, even with the most reasonable presumption of success, the honors, the riches, or distinctions of the world. Surely none can truly call themselves by the name of CHRIST, and refuse to rejoice with us in such an expression as this of zeal and love for the Savior and his truth. None can value the interests and honor of the Church, and behold without high emotion, those well qualified to send them, thus standing on its threshhold and looking back upon the world, its honors, interests, pleasures, and calmly, firmly, cheerfully bidding them farewell. No! we feel, my brethren, that you cannot but take part in our joy in receiving thus to the service of our LORD, those who so well promise to do it honor. While, then, you fervently join your prayers with ours, for the blessing of heaven on their pious and noble purpose; cease not, we pray you, to supplicate the LORD of the vineyard to send forth more laborers into his harvest—equal to its greatness and abundance. By the kindness and the honor which CHRIST demands for them, at the hands of all who call themselves his disciples, encourage their spirits and strengthen their hands: and thus while you promote his glory and the happiness and salvation of your fellow men, contribute to make him your friend and advocate in heaven, who hath said, *he that giveth a cup of cold water only to one of the least of these, in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward.*

THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL PULPIT.

SERMON BY THE RIGHT REV. JOHN CROES, D. D.

VOL. II.] MARCH, 1832. [NO. VIII.

THE SOLEMN CHARGE OF ST. PAUL TO THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS, ILLUSTRATED.

A Sermon

Preached in St. James' Church, at Philadelphia, before the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States:

BY THE RIGHT REV. JOHN CROES, D. D.,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW JERSEY.*

Acts xx. 28.—"*Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock' over the which the* Holy Ghost *hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of* God, *which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

This injunction is a part of that solemn and affecting charge, which the Apostle Paul, in his episcopal capacity, gave to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, a city of Asia Minor. The charge itself was delivered at Miletus, to which city, the apostle had summoned the elders, when on his way from Macedonia to Jerusalem. The introductory part of it was admirably calculated to conciliate their regard; and prepare their minds for a ready reception of the injunction that followed. It consists of an appeal to them, in proof of the trials, privations, and dangers, which he underwent; and the disinterestedness, self-denial, zeal, diligence, and fidelity, which he manifested, in preaching and inculcating the great doctrines of *repentance toward* God, *and faith toward the* Lord Jesus Christ: also of his determination to persevere in the same course; and his willingness to suffer all the imprisonment, and other afflictions, which, through the mo-

*This Right Reverend Prelate was consecrated in St. Peter's Church, in the city of Philadelphia, on Sunday, November 19, 1815, by the Right Reverend Bishop White, of Pennsylvania: the Right Reverend Bishop Hobart, of New York, and the Right Reverend Bishop Kemp, of Maryland, being present and assisting.

nitions of the HOLY SPIRIT, he foresaw, continually awaited him in every city. *None of these things*, said this faithful, this devoted servant of GOD, *move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the* LORD JESUS CHRIST, *to testify the Gospel of the grace of* GOD.

Having thus prepared the hearts of his auditors, he introduced the text, which strictly speaking, is itself the charge; for whatever, of that nature, occurs in the succeeding part of the chapter, may all be comprised in this comprehensive verse. *Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the* HOLY GHOST *hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of* GOD, *which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

The charge may be considered as consisting of three parts, careful attention to themselves; the same attention to the flock over which they had been placed; and the high obligations to such care, arising both from the divine nature of the Being, by whom they had thus been constituted overseers of that flock; and the immense value of the price which had been given for it, the blood of the Son of GOD.

These subjects will be discussed, in the order in which they stand.

In the exhortatory phrase, *Take heed to yourselves*, which is first to be considered, the apostle evidently intended to urge upon the elders addressed, the exercise of the greatest attention and care both with respect to the reality, the correctness, and the purity of their religious principles and affections; and also with respect to the propriety of their conduct in their intercourse with the world.

The first of these is indispensable, as well to private Christians, as to those who hold the sacred and highly responsible office of *ministers of* CHRIST, *and stewards of the mysteries of* GOD.*

Without such vigilance and care, with respect to their thoughts and feelings; without, indeed, daily application *to the throne of grace*,† for divine help to enable them to hold *the truth, as it is in* JESUS;‡ and to enjoy those affections, and possess those graces,

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* 1 Cor. iv. 1. † Heb. iv. 16. ‡ Eph. iv. 2.

which are *the fruits of the Spirit*; neither the minister of the Gospel, nor the private Christian, can long preserve his adoption, as a son of GOD. The consequence to both, as it respects their eternal state, will be the forfeiture of their salvation. But to the former there must be superadded, not only the guilt of violating his ordination vows, but also the inability thus produced, of regulating his life by the precepts of CHRIST; and consequently of rendering his ministry efficient and successful. No man, especially a clergyman, who is uninfluenced by religious principles, by a living faith, and is destitute of those holy affections, which, under divine grace, such principles are calculated to excite and cherish; however well he may, for a time, put on the semblance of a pious and virtuous life, can long continue to exercise that care and vigilance, relative to his conduct, which are necessary to conceal from the world the unsoundness of his pretensions, and his frequent deviations from the purity of the Christian precepts. The consequences of this—in the case of a clergyman—on the religious and moral condition of his flock, cannot fail to be highly injurious.

But, though the absence of a lively sense of religion, in the heart, will, sooner or later, inevitably be accompanied with a defective regard to religious and moral duties; the conclusion must not be drawn, that internal piety, unattended with care and watchfulness as to our conduct in life, will necessarily render that conduct, in all respects, conformable to the divine will. If such were the fact, the directions and injunctions to the practice of moral duties, in cases which presuppose the existence of a genuine faith, and a heart renovated by the HOLY SPIRIT, would have been entirely unnecessary. As it regards the ministry, where would have been the necessity of our Lord's direction to his disciples; *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works.** Where the necessity of St. Paul's exhortations to Timothy, *Thou, O man of* GOD, *flee these things*,—viz. envy, strife, covetousness, &c.—*and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*† *Flee youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace.*‡ We must therefore believe, that the apostle, in

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* Matt. v. 16. † 1 Tim. vi. 11. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 22.

the injunction, *Take heed to yourselves*, intended that the elders or presbyters of the Church at Ephesus, should pay a due regard as well to the piety, purity, and benevolence of their conduct, as of their hearts.

In what purity and uprightness of life, as applicable to all the orders of the ministry, chiefly consist, the apostle has stated, in his epistles to Timothy and Titus. They should, said he, *be blameless, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, not to wine, no strikers, not covetous, or greedy of filthy lucre, not brawlers, not selfwilled, not soon angry*, but *just, holy, temperate, gentle and patient;* judicious *rulers of their own houses*, persons, who sustain good characters, especially among those, *who are without*,* or do not belong to *the household of faith*,† and who, *in all things, shew themselves patterns of good works*.‡

But something more was implied, in this injunction, than the care and cultivation of religion in their own hearts and lives. As ambassadors of their Lord and Master to his rebellious creatures; as instructers to those, who manifested a disposition to return to their allegiance and duty, or had already accepted of the offers of pardon and grace; and as governors of that body, composed of these penitent and reconciled offenders, which is, by way of eminence, termed the Church; no doubt can exist, that knowledge of the doctrines and precepts of the religion of which they were ministers, aptness to teach, and wisdom to govern, were qualities also required in them, as well by reason as Scripture.

As to care, in the acquisition of the knowledge of divine truths, and of the learning ordinarily requisite for that purpose; although, from the circumstance that the miraculous gift of tongues, and other extraordinary endowments of the HOLY SPIRIT, still continued in the Church, it might be supposed not to come within the scope of the injunction to those primitive elders, To *take heed to themselves;* yet if we refer to the cases, in which the apostles urge the acquisition of them, upon those whom they constituted their fellow laborers, and successors in the ministry; it can hardly be doubted, that such was the case. Beside; though it is true, that

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* See 1 Tim. iii. and Tit. i. † Gal. vi. 10. ‡ Tit. ii. 8.

many doctrines, relating to the mysteries of redemption, which the apostles were not capable of bearing till after the resurrection and ascension of our Savior, were, according to his promise, communicated to them by the HOLY SPIRIT; yet it does not appear that this privilege was conferred upon others. That such was not the case—indeed, on the contrary, that other ministers were to obtain their knowledge of the Christian doctrines through the medium of the apostles, will plainly appear, by a reference to the passages, above mentioned, in which the duty and the manner of acquiring it, are inculcated and taught. *The things*, said St. Paul to Timothy, *that thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.** *Give attendance to reading, to doctrine*, said he to the same beloved youth, *meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and to the doctrine; continue in them.*†

A competent knowledge of the doctrines and precepts of our holy religion, is indeed indispensable to those, whose office it is to promulgate and explain them; and, with whatever facility this knowledge was originally obtained, it now requires considerable learning and laborious study, to become so well acquainted with them, as to qualify men for that sacred and responsible station.

But to knowledge must be added *aptness to teach*,‡ as it is termed by St. Paul. This is a quality also, in a considerable degree, necessary to a steward of the mysteries of GOD. It has generally its origin in nature; but it must be much cultivated, by study, by the acquisition of literature, and especially, by prayer for the divine blessing upon the exercise of it; before the possessor can be *approved unto* GOD, *a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*;§ *and be able also, by sound doctrine, to convince the gainsayers.*‖

Wisdom in the government of the Church, is another property requisite in the ministerial character. *To be wise as serpents*, at the same time, *as harmless as doves*,¶ was the instruction, which our blessed Lord gave to his disciples, when he first sent

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* 2 Tim. ii. 2. † 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15, 16. ‡ 1 Tim. iii. 2.
§ 2 Tim. ii. 15. ‖ Tit. i. 9. ¶ Mat. x. 16.

them out to proclaim, that *the kingdom of Heaven was at hand:** and although this was given with a view to another subject, the avoidance or defeat of the evil designs of enemies; yet it is as necessary to be observed in the administration of the government of the Church; if it is expected or desired that love, harmony, and peace, should prevail between the pastor and his flock; and among the several members of which it is composed. Without this quality—indeed, without the exercise of caution, moderation, discretion, and patience,—the results of true wisdom,—ministers, of whatever order, will make but little progress in the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom, if they are not indeed instrumental to its decline. An imprudent, though otherwise well meaning clergyman, may sometimes do as much harm in a Church, as a man, the reality of whose religion is doubted, and whose moral conduct is not such, as to entitle him to the esteem and respect of his flock. The cultivation of a property, therefore, so necessary to a judicious administration of the spiritual concerns of the Church, must also have been in the apostle's view, when he called upon the elders of the one at Ephesus, to *take heed to themselves.*

These are the principal duties, implied in that important injunction.

The apostle, however, did not stop here. Something further was necessary, in reminding these presbyters of the duties of their office, than the religious care of their own hearts and lives; and the due cultivation of those properties, which would render them capable of discharging such duties to effect. The faithful execution of the office itself, was a principal object of his concern; and therefore he charges them to *take heed* also *to all the flock* over which they had been appointed overseers, for the purpose of feeding it; in other words, *feeding the Church of* God.

Two great duties are here inculcated, that of superintendency, as overseers of the flock, and that, which was especially the object of their appointment, feeding it.

What the duties of the superintendency, here mentioned, are, may be learned from the metaphorical language used by the apostle; and from other passages of Scripture, of the same, or a similar

* Mat. x. 7.

import. As the shepherd, in the common and literal acceptation of the term, is not only to direct the sheep, committed to his care, as to the paths they may pursue; but is also to exercise the utmost caution and vigilance, to preserve them from harm, especially from the insidious design and open attacks of their natural enemies, the wolf and other beasts of prey; so it is the duty of the pastors of CHRIST'S flock, the Church, to direct and guide the members of it into the *way of salvation, the path of life;* and to caution them against, and guard them from, not only those heretical and schismatical teachers, who artfully endeavor to delude them, and draw them from the truth of the Gospel; but also, those still more dangerous foes, the world, their naturally corrupt passions, and the spiritual powers of darkness. In a word, to *watch for their souls as they that must give account.**

That the duty last mentioned, was included in the injunction, *Take heed to all the flock*, is evident from the remarks which immediately follow the text. *For I know this*, said St Paul, *that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch.*

To carry into effect this superintendency, power is requisite. Indeed it is necessarily implied in the term. There could be little or no use, in inspecting the concerns of any part of the Church, under less authority existed in the officer to correct the disorders, which might prevail in it, and put into execution any legal measures tending to its purity and prosperity. That such authority does exist, in the ministerial office, will not be questioned, when reference is made to the declaration of our LORD to his disciples; *whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven;*† and to the question, *who is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his* household?‡ again when he says to the twelve, *I appoint unto you a kingdom, &c.*§ But, though this authority undoubtedly exists, mi-

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* Heb. xiii. 17. † Matt. xviii. 18. ‡ Luke xii. 42. § Luke xxii. 29.

nisters are bound, as well to observe great prudence and moderation, as decision, and firmness, in the exercise of it: for *the* LORD *hath given it to us*, saith St. Paul, *for edification, and not destruction.**

To the same purpose, St. Peter exhorts the elders of the Churches, in some of the cities of Asia Minor, *To feed the flock of* GOD, *taking the oversight thereof, not, as being lords over* GOD'S *heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*†

The other great duty, included in the injunction, *Take heed to all the flock*, is *feeding it.*

The metaphorical expression, *feed the flock*, occurs in other places in Scripture; as the injunction of our blessed Lord to St. Peter, *Feed my lambs, feed my sheep;* and of St. Peter himself, as was repeated in the preceding article, *Feed the flock of* GOD.‡ The meaning of the metaphor *feed*, in these cases, is sufficiently obvious from its application; but it is put beyond doubt, in the prophet Jeremiah, where it is used in connection with words which illustrate it. *I will give you pastors according to mine own heart, saith the* LORD, *who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*‖ *To feed*, therefore, as it stands in the text, may be understood to comprehend every thing, in the ministerial office, which comes under the terms, instructing, persuading, exhorting, reproving, and consoling, both in public and private; every authorized act indeed, which will increase the flock, by drawing into it those who are immersed in sin, infected with unbelief, or error; and which will tend to nurture, and bring the whole, to maturity, and to the enjoyment of everlasting life.

It was the duty then of the elders, and urged upon them, by the apostle, to instruct the flock of CHRIST in the important doctrines and precepts of the Gospel; to open to their understanding the great mysteries of redemption, and the nature and obligation of the ordinances peculiar to that divine institution; to unfold the various duties of life, in all their extent and purity, and by arguments, drawn from their excellency, and from the example of the illustrious Author of redemption, inculcate and enforce the practice of them; and, as a motive to their perseverance in the faith, and

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* 2 Cor. x. 8. † 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. ‡ Ibid. ‖ Jeremiah. iii. 15.

in a godly course, to bring frequently to their view the important truth, that *life and immortality are brought to light.** As precepts, that enforce and illustrate this duty, I refer you to what was said, under the Old Testament dispensation. *They* (the Levites) *shall teach Jacob thy judgments and Israel thy law.*† *The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and* the people *should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the* LORD *of Hosts.*‡ It was observed also, by our blessed Lord himself; in reference to the ministry in general; that *Every scribe, who is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man, that is a householder, who bringeth forth, out of his treasure, things new and old.*§ The great object of CHRIST, said St. Paul, in giving *some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,* was, *for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of* CHRIST.‖ But more is required of the preachers of the Gospel, than simply to instruct. It is their duty also to persuade,—earnestly entreat, indeed, those who are not members of the Church, to repent, accept of GOD'S offers in CHRIST, and unite themselves with his chosen flock; to exhort those, on the other hand, *to live righteously, soberly, and godly,*¶ who, although nominally members of that body, do not *put off the old man,*** or live up to the spirit of their profession; and if, notwithstanding, they continue in their ungodly and immoral courses, freely to reprove them; not, however, injudiciously, or unseasonably, but tenderly and discreetly; "to use," indeed, both public and "private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as the whole, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given."††

Such was the practice and the precepts of the apostle, as recorded in other places. *We are ambassadors for* CHRIST, said he to the Corinthians, *as though* GOD *did beseech you by us: we pray you in* CHRIST'S *stead, be ye reconciled to* GOD.‡‡ On another occasion, *We beseech you, that ye receive not the grace of* GOD

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* 2 Tim. i. 10. † Deut. xxxiii. 10. ‡ Mat. ii. 7. § Mat. xiii. 52. ‖ Ephe. iv. 2.
¶ Tit. ii. 12. ** Ephe. iv. 22. †† Ordination service. ‡‡ 2. Cor. v. 20.

*in vain.** In his directions to Titus, after naming several subjects, on which instruction or exhortation should be given, he adds, *these things speak, and exhort, and rebuke, with all authority.*†

Administering consolation, is another duty implied, in feeding the Church of God.

Such is the difference, in the human character, and such the diversity of condition in life, that while some, from the native hardness and obstinacy of their tempers, or from the almost uninterrupted prosperity and health which they enjoy, give frequent occasions for admonition or reproof; others are so timid and so diffident of themselves, or are so depressed with heavy and successive afflictions, that, instead of chiding, they require encouragement or consolation. The administration of the latter, therefore, is as necessary, as of the former; and calls for a reasonable proportion of every clergyman's attention. To perform this duty, with effect, however, much depends on the administrator's cultivation of that brotherly kindness for the members of his flock; that real sympathy in their doubts and afflictions, which are the result of genuine religion. St. Paul has left on record, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, a specimen of his own conduct in this respect. *Ye know*, said he, *how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you as a father doth his children.*‡

A faithful and devout attention to the public exercises of religion; as the due celebration of divine service, and the proper administration of the holy sacrament, together with those duties of a less public nature, as visiting the sick, &c., may also be considered as comprehended in the phrase *feeding the flock.*

It becomes now a proper subject of inquiry, in what manner, the duties comprised in that phrase, should be performed. From the Scriptures we learn, that zeal, diligence, and fidelity, are qualities required in the execution of the ministerial office.

In a work of such importance, as drawing men from the dominion and servitude of sin and Satan, *into the glorious liberty of the children of* God;§ and training them up, under the aids of

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* 2 Cor. vi. 10. † Tit. ii. 15. ‡ 1 Thes. ii. 11. § Rom. viii. 21.

his Holy Spirit, for the fruition of his blessed presence, in the celestial world; it is reasonable to suppose, considering the greatness, the sacredness, and the responsibility of the office, with which ministers are honored, that they cannot but be zealous and diligent in the good work. Such was not only the fact, with St. Paul himself; but that it might be so, also, with his fellow laborers and successors, in the glorious cause, he earnestly and tenderly urges them to these duties; and offers himself as an example for their imitation. *Preach the word*, said he to Timothy; *be instant, in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering, and doctrine.** *Watch thou in all things, endure affliction, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*† *Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia*, said the apostle, in the charge, from which the text is taken, *after what manner, I have been with you at all seasons; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; but have shewed you, and have taught you, publicly, and from house to house.*‡

But, however zealous and diligent a minister may be, in the discharge of the duties of his office, there is one property, without which, his preaching will be of little use, and of still less estimation, in the view of pious Christians. I mean *fidelity* in dispensing divine truths. And unless he adhere to the simplicity of the Gospel, in his public instruction; unless in the composition of his discourses, he aim at the edification, the *awakening*, and the comforting of his flock, rather than at the display of his talents and learning, preaching CHRIST JESUS the LORD, and not himself;§ —unless, like St. Paul, *he shun not to declare all the counsel of* GOD,‖ however displeasing certain doctrines and precepts of the Gospel may be to some of his hearers; and unless it be his aim, and his delight *to please* GOD,¶ rather than men; he can neither be entitled to the character of a clergyman of fidelity in his profession; nor, according to St. Paul, *be accounted a minister of* CHRIST, *and steward of the mysteries of* GOD; *because it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*** For the

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* 2 Tim. iv. 2. † 2 Tim. iv. 5. ‡ Acts xx. 18, 20. § 2 Cor. iv. 5
‖ Acts xx. 27. ¶ 1 Thes. ii. 4. ** 1 Cor. iv. 1.

same reason, he cannot come under the description of *that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat, in due season*:* nor can he say, with our apostle, *I have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of* God *deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending myself to every man's conscience, in the sight of* God.†

In making these observations on the necessity of fidelity in preaching the Gospel; I would not have it supposed, that I contend for, or even countenance, that mistaken fidelity, that extreme, on the subject, of laying great stress upon certain opinions, not important in themselves, nor necessary to salvation; which men of metaphysical minds have derived from detached and obscure passages of Scripture; and which their followers make a great merit of boldly declaring to be important parts of *the counsel of* God. Nor do I countenance unnecessary harshness, in declaring any truth of the Gospel; or perpetually harping on some doctrine, important indeed, but not exclusively so; and which cannot fail, in the end, to become wearisome to the hearers.

Neither of these, nor any thing similar, comes within the correct idea of fidelity.

Having thus attempted to show, what was implied in the injunctions, in St. Paul's charge, *Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock;* I am now to call to your attention, the high obligations to such care, arising both from the divine nature of the Being, by whom these persons had been constituted overseers of the flock; and the immense value of the price, which had been given for it, the blood of the Son of God.

Whether the elders, as some have suggested, were the twelve persons, mentioned in the preceding chapter, as having, in consequence of the imposition of the apostle's hands, received the Holy Ghost; and were thus qualified to speak with tongues and prophesy: and whether from this circumstance especially, they were said by him, to have been made overseers by that Divine Person,

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* Luke xii. 42. † 2 Cor. iv. 2.

cannot now be determined: nor is it a matter of consequence; as no doubt can be entertained, by those who examine the Scriptures, that the same HOLY BEING is the source of the office and authority of the Christian ministry; whether the conveyance of it, by the imposition of the hands of the apostles, or bishops, was accompanied, as in those early ages of the Church, with miraculous gifts; or, in succeeding ages, when the necessity for them no longer existed, without such advantages.

That St. Paul intended, by reminding the elders of the sacred and exalted source from which they derived their ministry, to impress more forcibly upon their minds the injunction, *Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock;* is, I think, sufficiently evident from the tenor of the charge. If, therefore, from the great and merciful object of the institution of that ministry,—had it originated only in man,—much obligation to execute it faithfully, would naturally rest upon the mind of the occupant; how far greater would be the sense of it, whenever it should occur to his thoughts, that the Almighty searcher of the hearts, and trier of the reins of men, that immaculate Being "to whom all hearts are open, and all desires known," had honored him, with that dignified, though responsible office; and expected from him a performance of the duties of it, corresponding with the high favor conferred; and the important object for which it was instituted. This sense of obligation would be much increased, from the reflection, that he is indebted to the same gracious and divine Being for the disposition and ability to perform properly the duties of the office, as for the office itself. It is indeed the peculiar province of the HOLY SPIRIT, to prepare the mind and heart of the preacher, to give seasonable and wholesome instruction and counsel; as well as of the hearer, to receive them. Feeling, therefore, as he ought, the immense weight of these obligations, can he be otherwise than powerfully excited to the performance of his duties?

But there is an obligation to discharge them faithfully, of a still higher and more affecting nature; viz., that *the Church of* GOD, which the elders were appointed by the HOLY GHOST to feed, was *purchased with his blood.* As the correctness of the reading, in the passage, *the Church of* GOD, *which he hath purchased*

with his own blood, has been called in question, by those, who deny the divinity of our Savior; it will be expected, perhaps,—especially, as the force of what I shall observe on the topic before us, rests principally on the truth of that property in CHRIST—that something will be said in support of that reading. As it stands in our Bible, it is a most decisive testimony of the Deity of that illustrious person: for he that shed his blood for the Church, is there expressly called GOD.

It cannot be disputed, however, that in several ancient manuscript copies of the New Testament; as well as in some other versions, a different reading exists. Instead of *the Church of* GOD, some have *the Church of the* Lord, others, *the Church of the* Lord, *and of* GOD, *or of our* LORD GOD. The first of these, viz. *the Church of the* Lord, as it presents the least difficulty to the Unitarians, who deny that the term Lord, when applied to CHRIST, is any evidence of his divinity—they contend, is the true reading. There is, however, one considerable objection to it.

The phrase, *Church of the* Lord is never used in the New Testament. On the other hand, *the Church of* GOD, frequently occurs. The late Gilbert Wakefield, a learned Unitarian, acknowledges, therefore, that the phrase, *Church of* GOD, is the true reading; but instead of translating the *Greek* phrase, which is literally translated in our version, *with his own blood*, he renders it, *by his own Son;* "and brings some passages from the Greek and Roman writers to shew that the words, in those languages, which literally signify blood, are used also to signify Son, or near relative: and were this the only place, where purchasing with his own blood occurred, we might receive this saying; but as the redemption of a man is, throughout the New Testament, attributed to the sacrificial death of CHRIST, it is not likely, that this very unusual meaning should apply here."*

Considering, therefore, the reading, as it stands in our version, most likely to be correct; and, as it regards the sense, substantially the same, with the other readings already mentioned; and consequently, believing that the Church, which the elders of Ephesus, and all other duly qualified ministers were appointed to feed, was

* See Whitby, Clarke, Scott, &c., in loc.

purchased, at so immense a price as the blood of Him, who is GOD as well as man; in whom, indeed, dwelleth *all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;** what must be its value; and therefore what the obligation *to take heed*, resting upon those under whose care and nurture, it was thus placed? It requires but little reflection, —a slight glance, indeed, at the subject, to perceive the force of this interrogation; and therefore the weight, the importance, and the affecting nature of the charge, which was given by St. Paul, in such strong terms, to the elders; and enforced with such powerful, such almost overwhelming considerations. That creatures so inferior,—so comparatively low in the scale of intelligence, creatures so fallen, so depraved, as those elders, in common with other men were, should be honored, by a special, a Divine commission, with the office of superintending and spiritually feeding that Body, for whose salvation, and whose final exaltation to an eternal and blissful immortality, the beloved Son of GOD, *the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*,† mercifully condescended, in his incarnate state to suffer,—to shed, indeed, his most precious blood; must have been a reflection, that could not but astonish, and, at the same time, humble and alarm them, under the immense weight of the obligation which it implied.

In the discussion of the charge before us, I have not considered it necessary to advert to the circumstance; that though my observations were chiefly confined, in their application, to the elders addressed by the apostle; yet I took it for granted, that I should be understood; for this ought to be the understanding, in all such cases,—as intending, that their application should be extended to Christian ministers, in general.

Under this view of the subject, then, well may we exclaim, Right Reverend and Reverend Brethren, in the words of the apostle, *Who is sufficient for these things?*‡ Which of us, frail and imperfect as we are, sufficiently *takes heed to himself;* to the daily increase of the piety and purity of his own heart and life; to a faithful improvement in that knowledge, and those other qualities, so necessary for the proper and efficient discharge of his moment-

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* Col. ii. 9. † Heb. i. 3. ‡ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

ous duties? Which of us, in the degree required, *takes heed* to the flock, which he is appointed to superintend, and to feed; or, at all times, sufficiently considers what that superintendence, and nurture imply; also, whether he performs those duties, in the extensive, faithful, and zealous manner, which is expected of him; and which his own heart assures him he ought? Which of us constantly lives, under the deep impression and influence, that his office is derived from the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD; that he is the minister of JESUS CHRIST; and that the flock, which he is appointed to feed, is a part of that immense Body, the Church, for the purchase of which, the Son of GOD both suffered and died; and, therefore, feels as he ought, the awful responsibility, attached to his office?

Such deficiencies, we are constrained to acknowledge, exist: a part, indeed, the effect of the infirmities and weakness of our nature; but a part, also, from our too great attachment to the world, and our neglect of watchfulness and prayer. Let us earnestly entreat our Heavenly Father that both may be forgiven; but that the latter, through the influences of his HOLY SPIRIT, may be corrected, so that we may not ultimately fall into condemnation; and *after we have preached to others, be ourselves cast-aways.**

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* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

The present number of the *Pulpit*, containing the Discourse of Bishop CROES, having been *printed*, though not published, previous to his decease, it would have been sent out much earlier to subscribers, but in order that the Discourse of the venerated, and much respected Prelate, might be attended by this *obituary notice*, for the preparation and procurement of which, *some days* have necessarily been expended. They are now, together, submitted for the respectful consideration of the patrons and subscribers to the work. The September number will soon be out.

OBITUARY NOTICE OF BISHOP CROES.

Died, at his residence in New Brunswick, N. J., on the 30th day of July, the Right Reverend JOHN CROES, D. D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of New Jersey.

Bishop CROES was born in Elizabethtown, N. J., on the 1st day of June, 1762, of parents who had emigrated from Germany. At the age of eleven, he removed with his parents to the town of Newark. His father originally designed to instruct him in some mechanical employment, as a means of future support, since the circumstances of the family were not such as to warrant incurring the expense of a liberal education. But very early in life the subject of this notice manifested a great fondness for books, and embraced every opportunity which offered to improve himself by reading. His father observing this, at length gave him the option of learning a trade or procuring an education *by means of his own exertions*. He chose the latter alternative. His endeavors in this respect, were, however, for a considerable time, retarded by the war of the revolution. In three or four years after the war commenced, he was called upon to take up arms in the cause of his country, and he continued engaged in this cause, with occasional intervals of rest, till the peace in 1782. He then resumed in earnest, and with that diligence and energy that marked his course through life, the acquisition of a liberal education. In doing this he was materially assisted by the late Rev. Dr. MACWHORTER, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Newark—a friend for whom he always entertained the highest regard, and who continued to manifest his kind offices towards him ever after. By indefatigable perseverance, Mr. CROES soon acquired a good knowledge of the

Latin and Greek languages, at the same time laying the foundation of an unusually accurate knowledge of the English language. Having made these acquisitions, he undertook the business of instruction, thereby riveting more deeply the knowledge he had obtained, and procuring the means of supporting himself while studying divinity. In 1785, he married Martha Crane, daughter of a respectable citizen of Newark. Their offspring consisted of five sons and three daughters, of whom four are at this time living, viz. two sons, (both ministers in the Episcopal Church,) and two daughters. Mr. CROES continued in the business of instruction and of preparation for the ministry till the year 1789. He then visited the town of Swedesborough, in Gloucester county, and accepted an invitation to act as a lay-reader in Trinity church in that place, for a few months. In February, 1790, he was ordained Deacon, by Bishop WHITE, and assumed the full charge of the congregation. In March, 1792, he was admitted by the same Right Reverend gentleman to the holy order of Priests.

Swedesborough is a Swedish settlement, and the congregation originally was attached to the Swedish Church. When Mr. CROES assumed the charge of it, all its concerns, both temporal and spiritual, were in an unprosperous state. The church edifice was not finished, and the worshippers were few. He applied himself immediately to the finishing of the church, and soon rendered it one of the neatest and most convenient in the diocese. All the other temporal affairs of the congregation quickly assumed a more promising aspect, while the hearers and communicants steadily increased in number. In this place he resided twelve years. In the year 1801, he received an invitation from Christ Church, New Brunswick, and St. Peter's Church, Spotswood, to become their pastor, and at the same time was elected principal of the academy in New Brunswick, which had been without a teacher for some time. This academy was the remains of what had been Queen's College —the exercises in which had been for several years discontinued. Here, also, both as minister and teacher, he exhibited the same ardent desire to be useful, and to improve the concerns committed to his charge. The academy, which he commenced with fifteen scholars, soon numbered fifty, and sixty, and seventy, and attained a character not excelled by any other in the state. The affairs of his churches also prospered under his judicious management. In 1808, he resigned the charge of the academy, (having previously resigned that of the church at Spotswood,) and devoted himself solely to the church in New Brunswick. In 1815, he was elected by the Convention of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, Bishop of that Diocese. But for weighty reasons, he thought proper to decline that honorable post, although the emoluments

of it would have been more than double his salary, at any time, in New Jersey. In the same year he was chosen Bishop of the Episcopal Church in his own Diocese, and was consecrated to that holy office, in November, by Bishop WHITE,—Bishops HOBART and KEMP being present and assisting. In this responsible office also, the same traits of industry and zeal were, by him, manifested. Almost every year he visited all the churches in the Diocese, and by his judicious management of the missionary fund, he assisted in resuscitating several old and decayed congregations, and in establishing several new ones.

Of Bishop CROES, it may with truth be said, that the Church in New Jersey is to him indebted for a "long continuance of his nursing care and protection." For forty years he took a prominent share in her concerns, and for the greater part of that time, the *most prominent*. Nearly all the general institutions of the Church originated directly or indirectly in him, and ever received from him the warmest patronage and support—while such was the confidence reposed in him by both the clergy and laity, that for a long time they seemed cheerfully to accede to him the control and management of most of these institutions. To the Church his heart and affections were devoted—every instance of her prosperity caused him to rejoice, and never was he happier than when laboring for her.

From what has been said, it will be observed that Bishop CROES was a self-made man—"*faber suæ fortunæ*." Humanly speaking, to himself alone was he indebted for his attainments and his reputation; and the source of these may be traced to the qualities that particularly marked his character—industry, perseverance, a temper never desponding, and a mind unusually sagacious and accurate in its views. As a writer, Bishop CROES was uncommonly correct, his style is distinguished by neatness—his choice of words by the most scrupulous attention to their true signification. As a speaker, notwithstanding a complaint in his head which generally injures distinctness of articulation, it would be difficult to find any one more easily heard and understood. In reading the service of the Church, he was peculiarly happy. As a member of society, he was distinguished for the strict uprightness of his conduct, the urbanity and dignity of his manners, his kindness to the poor and afflicted, and the interest he took in all benevolent institutions. Bishop CROES was, from the natural disposition of his mind, a lover of order; he therefore never could tolerate deviations from the rubrics and canons of the Church; while, perhaps, no person could be found better acquainted than he was, with her laws and regulations. Finally, his discourses were all marked by clear and forcible exhibitions of the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion. He "rests from his labors," but his works will long be remembered.

FUNERAL OF THE LATE BISHOP CROES.

The funeral of the Right Rev. John Croes, D. D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New Jersey, was attended on Tuesday, July 31, at 2 o'clock, P. M., at his late residence, in New Brunswick. The assemblage of the members of the flock of which the deceased had been, for about thirty years, the much respected pastor, of the people of other denominations in that city, and of those who came from other places to testify their regard for the deceased prelate, was large. Precisely at the hour of three, a long procession moved, with slow and solemn steps, to the venerable edifice in which the deceased servant of Christ had long officiated. The pall was borne by two of the clergy of the deceased Bishop, and by several ministers of the different denominations attached to Rutgers College, and to the several churches in the city, all assembled in Christian fellowship for the solemn and affecting purpose of conveying to the house of silence, the mortal remains of the first bishop that had finished his course in the Diocese of New Jersey. The anthem and the lesson in the funeral service, were read by the Rev. John M. Ward, Rector of St. Peter's Church in Spotswood; and the service at the grave, which was opened near the chancel, was pronounced by the Rev. T. Chapman, Rector of St. Peter's Church in Perth Amboy. A deep solemnity pervaded the whole assembly, and the words of the funeral service, in which it is expressed that "it hath pleased Almighty God, in his wise providence to take out of the world the soul of our deceased" *Right Reverend Father in* God, went home to the feelings of all, but more especially of those who admired in the deceased Bishop a firm attachment to the doctrines and practices of the Church, adorned with a consistent and exemplary conduct in all the relations of life.

It would have been gratifying to the feelings of the mourning relatives, and of the other friends of the deceased, if one of the brethren of the deceased in the Episcopal station, according to custom, could have been present to add a funeral discourse to the other solemnities of the occasion. But time could not be taken to procure the attendance of one of the bishops; Bishop Onderdonk, of New York, being absent in a distant part of his Diocese, and the Bishops of Pennsylvania being too far removed to admit of the attendance of either of them on the occasion.

Immediately after the conclusion of the funeral solemnities, the clergy of the Diocese present met, and passed several resolutions expressive of their respect for the memory of their much valued and respected Diocesan, and of their sympathy with his family under their severe bereavement.

PROCEEDINGS IN THE DIOCESE OF NEW JERSEY.

Proceedings of the Protestant Episcopal Clergy in the Diocese of New Jersey.

At a meeting of a number of the clergy of the Diocese of New Jersey, held at New Brunswick, on the 31st day of July, 1832, the Rev. JAMES CHAPMAN being called to the Chair, and the Rev. JOHN M. WARD appointed Secretary, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted:—

Whereas, it hath pleased ALMIGHTY GOD, in his wise providence, to call from the scene of his earthly labors, our Rt. Rev. Father in GOD, JOHN CROES, D. D., Bishop of the Diocese of New Jersey, therefore be it unanimously resolved,

1st. That while we feel it our duty to bow with humble submission to this afflictive dispensation of Divine Providence, we cannot refrain from expressing our deep regret, at the loss which this Diocese, and the clergy in particular, have sustained by the removal of our venerated Diocesan, whose many virtues as a Christian endeared him to the hearts of all who knew him, and whose sound, consistent, and undeviating principles, so eminently qualified him for the office of a Bishop; and by whose nursing care the Church in this Diocese is, under GOD, indebted for its great increase and prosperity. His indefatigable zeal, fidelity, and promptitude, in laboring to discharge, though in feeble health, the duties of his apostolic and ministerial character, and to promote the best interests of our holy religion, and of the Church, placed him high in the affections, and secured the esteem of his clergy, in whom they ever found an affectionate friend, a wise counsellor, and a most faithful overseer and guide.

2d. That we offer our sincere condolence to the widow, and other members of the family of our deceased Bishop, and heartily pray that they may enjoy the consolation and support of the Gospel in their sore bereavement, and that GOD will sanctify to them, and to his Church, this afflictive dispensation of his providence.

3d. That as a further testimonial of respect and veneration for the memory of our revered Diocesan, we will wear the customary badge of mourning for thirty days, and we respectfully recommend to our brethren throughout the Diocese to do the same, as an expression of mourning for our bereavement.

4th. That a copy of the above resolutions, signed by the Secretary, be sent to the family of the deceased, and to the Editors of the Times, the Fredonian, and the Churchman, for publication.

JOHN M. WARD, *Secretary.*

Proceedings of the Vestry of St. Peter's Church, Spotswood, in relation to the death of Bishop CROES.

At a meeting of the Vestry of St. Peter's Church, Spotswood, held, on Tuesday, July 31st, 1832, at 9 o'clock, A. M., the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

1st. That this Vestry have heard, with feelings of deep and unfeigned sorrow, of the decease of their venerable and much esteemed Diocesan and former Rector, the Rt. Rev. Bishop CROES.

2d. That this Vestry cherish with grateful remembrance, not only his valuable services amongst them during the time of his connexion with them as their Rector, but also, since his election to the Episcopate, his pious, consistent, and persevering endeavors, to promote the best interests of the Church, and of the Diocese at large, over which he has so long, so faithfully, and so efficiently presided.

3d. That as a further testimonial of respect for the private and public character of our Bishop, we will cause the church to be hung with the customary badge of mourning until the festival of Advent Sunday.

4th. That while we feel it our duty to bow with submission to the dispensations of an all wise Providence, we offer our sincere condolence to the widow and other members of the family in their sore bereavement, and heartily pray that He who has declared himself to be the "Father of the fatherless and the GOD of the widow," will sustain them with the spiritual consolations of that holy religion which supported their beloved head through the long and painful illness with which he was afflicted.

5th. That a copy of the above resolutions be forwarded by the Secretary to the family of the deceased Bishop, and also to the Editors of the Fredonian, and the Churchman, for publication.

JAMES D. TARRINGTON, *Secretary.*

PROCEEDINGS IN THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK.

During Bishop ONDERDONK's visit to Ithaca, on Wednesday, the 8th instant, several of the clergy of the Diocese being there present, passed, in conjunction with the Bishop, the following resolutions, occasioned by the death of the late Bishop of New Jersey.

The subscribers, the Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New York, and clergymen of the said Church, being assembled in the village of Ithaca, in the said State, on occasion of the official visit of the Bishop to the Church in that village, and having received information of the decease of the Right Rev. JOHN CROES, D. D., Bishop of the Diocese of New Jersey, do hereby unanimously resolve:

1. That we tender our sincere condolence to our brethren of the Diocese of New Jersey, on the severe bereavement to which they have been called, in the death of their venerable and excellent Diocesan; and to the venerated relict and family of the deceased, on their peculiarly heavy affliction.

2. That we cherish a lively remembrance of the sound principles, the primitive piety, the official fidelity, and the many estimable traits of character which commended the late Bishop of New Jersey to the confidence of all true friends of the Church, the respect of all who knew him, and the love of all who enjoyed the privilege of his familiar intercourse.

3. That we gratefully recollect his claims on the peculiar regard of the Churchmen of this Diocese, growing out of the essential services which he rendered to it during the absence from the country of its late Diocesan.

4. That in testimony of our respect for his memory, we will wear crape on the left arm for the space of thirty days.

5. That a copy of these resolutions, signed by all present, be sent to the family of the late Bishop, and another to the Secretary of the Convention of New Jersey.

BENJAMIN T. ONDERDONK.
LUCIUS CARTER.
HENRY GREGORY.
JAMES D. CARDER.
GEORGE FISKE.

Ithaca, N. Y., August 8th, 1832.

At a meeting of *Clergymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the city of New York*, held at the house of the Rev. THOMAS LYELL, D. D., on Thursday, August 16, 1832,—

The Rev. Dr. LYELL was called to the Chair, and the Rev. Mr. SCHROEDER was appointed Secretary.

The Chairman having stated the object of the meeting, the fol-

lowing preamble and resolutions, offered by the Rev. Dr. BERRIAN, were unanimously adopted.

Intelligence having been recently communicated of the death of the Right Rev. JOHN CROES, D. D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New Jersey,—and desirous to testify our grief at this afflictive dispensation of Providence, and our unfeigned respect for his memory,

Resolved, That this meeting, entertaining a high sense of the unaffected piety, exemplary conduct, sound principles, and faithful services of the late Bishop CROES, sincerely sympathize with the clergy and laity of the Diocese of New Jersey, in the loss which they have sustained.

Resolved, That in recollection of his social and domestic virtues, which endeared him so much to all with whom he was connected, they deeply condole also with his family and friends.

Resolved, That copies of the foregoing preamble and resolutions be communicated to the vestries of the several Episcopal parishes in New Jersey, and to the family of Bishop CROES.

THOMAS LYELL, *Chairman.*

J. F. SCHROEDER, *Secretary.*

NOTE.—To *prove* the high sentiments of veneration and those warm feelings of regard that are entertained for the memory of the lamented Bishop, by our American Church, it is here *noticed* that proceedings and resolutions, of a similar character with the above, have been made and held in *several* States of the Union. "The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance."—ED.

THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL PULPIT.

SERMON BY THE REV. BENJAMIN DORR.
SERMON BY THE REV. WM. H. HART.

VOL. II.) SEPTEMBER, 1832. (NO. IX.

ON KNOWING EACH OTHER IN THE WORLD OF SPIRITS.

A Sermon

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN DORR,
RECTOR OF TRINITY CHURCH, UTICA, ONEIDA COUNTY, NEW YORK.

1 Corinthians, xiii. 12.—"*Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*"

THIS was the declaration of an inspired apostle; of one who enjoyed clearer communications of Divine mysteries than were usually given, even to inspired men. He himself tells us that he had been *caught up into the third heaven*, the glorious residence of JEHOVAH, and there heard such *unspeakable words* as no mortal had ever before heard, and *which it was not lawful*, or possible, *for him to utter*. Yet, after having been favored with *abundance of revelations*, he confesses the present imperfection of his knowledge, compared with that fulness of understanding which should hereafter be given him. *For now*, he says, *we see through a glass darkly;* our vision is obscured by the imperfect medium through which we discern spiritual objects; but hereafter, when this veil of flesh is removed, we shall see *face to face;* clearly and perfectly. *Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

And if such, my brethren, were the confessions of St. Paul, when his understanding was enlightened by immediate Divine revelation, with how much greater propriety may *we* adopt his language and say *now we know in part!* Here our faculties, even when most cultivated, are confined within a very narrow compass,—our prospects are bounded by a very limited horizon. And this im-

perfection of human knowledge extends both to the *natural* and *spiritual* world.

How little do we know of the *natural* world! The greatest discoveries of human science have only served to exhibit to man his weakness and his ignorance. The astronomer has endeavored to explore those vast worlds which roll above us, and has succeeded so far as to determine the size, and distance, and periodical revolutions of a few of those heavenly orbs, which lie within our own system; but here his discoveries end. He knows not how many millions of worlds extend beyond these into the regions of infinite space; nor can he tell what mysterious chain connects these immense bodies to their respective systems, or reveal the power, which, by Divine command, causes them to move with such perfect order and harmony. As little does he know of the beings which inhabit them.

The philosopher has investigated a small number of the objects on the surface of our earth; he has penetrated a few fathoms into its bosom; but, with all his wisdom, he cannot comprehend the wonderful mechanism of the smallest insect that flutters in a summer's sun, nor tell what pencil painted the lowliest flower that blossoms in the vale; neither can he understand how a grain of sand, or a blade of grass is formed.

And if our knowledge of the *natural* world is thus limited, that of the *spiritual* world is much more confined. We *see* it *through a glass darkly;* we *know* it *but in part.* The book of revelation has made us as fully acquainted, perhaps, with the invisible world, as our limited faculties would allow, or our present state required. It has made known to us, in some degree, the nature and attributes of JEHOVAH; but how very imperfect are our conceptions, even of these! What clear ideas, for example, can we form of a Being purely spiritual, who never had a beginning, and who can never have an end? What distinct notions have we of GOD's omnipotence, which nothing can resist; of his omniscience, from which nothing is concealed; of his omnipresence, which equally pervades all space? *Behold,* says Job, GOD *is great and we know him not; neither can the number of his years be searched out!* We see, indeed, the operations of His hands, and His *works are*

manifest; but when the mind of man attempts to rise above the clear discoveries of revelation, it is "lost in endless mazes." *Canst thou by searching find out* GOD? *Canst thou find out* THE ALMIGHTY *unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?*

How imperfect is our knowledge of GOD'S *providential dispensations!* How mysterious are most of His proceedings in the moral government of the universe! Why is it that the wicked enjoy so great a share of worldly prosperity, while the righteous are often doomed to penury and suffering? The Psalmist *thought to understand this; but it was too hard for him, until he went into the sanctuary of* GOD.* Why is the young man cut off suddenly, in the bloom and vigor of life, and the hoary-headed sinner permitted to go down to the grave by leisurely decay? To questions such as these there can be but one reply: GOD'S *ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts.*

How little do we know, even of *our own minds!* We are "a mystery to ourselves!" "We know not what our soul is, otherwise than by its operations." We cannot tell how the soul is united to the body, nor by what mysterious process ideas are treasured up in the memory. Of the inhabitants of the invisible world—of the angels, who are *ministering spirits,*—the mode of their subsistence, their employment and duties, we know comparatively nothing. All these are subjects too vast for human comprehension. We see them, as it were, *through a glass darkly;* we *know* them but *in part.* But when the Christian shall have thrown off this covering of flesh, which clogs all the faculties of the soul, and his disembodied spirit rises to the mansions of everlasting light, *then shall he see face to face;* and *know even as he is known.* All the treasures of knowledge will be unlocked to his admiring gaze, and his thirsty soul will drink of those fountains of wisdom, which flow from the throne of the ETERNAL. We may presume that he will be made acquainted with all those mysteries which are not now revealed, both in the book of nature and

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* Psalms lxxiii, 15.

of grace. In a word, the saints in light will be as wise, as they will be happy; will see clearly as they are now seen, and know as perfectly as they are now known of GOD.

But there is one question connected with this subject, which is often anxiously asked, and which I shall make the subject of consideration for the remainder of this discourse; WHAT SHALL WE KNOW OF OUR FRIENDS IN ANOTHER LIFE? and HOW FAR WILL THE ATTACHMENTS WHICH BIND US HERE, BE CONTINUED HEREAFTER? It is a question of universal interest; and is not without its practical utility. All of us have seen many of our dearest friends and acquaintances removed to the world of spirits, and it is natural for us to inquire whether we shall ever meet to recognise each other again; and, if so, whether those feelings of affection, which we now cherish, will remain after death.

That departed spirits will know each other, and that, among them, the endearments of friendship will be renewed, seems to be agreeable to the soundest dictates of *reason*, and the clearest intimations of *Scripture*.

The doctrine is perfectly consonant to *reason*. Unless it be true that the souls of the righteous possess this knowledge, their views of GOD's wisdom, and justice, and mercy, must necessarily be very imperfect in a future state. The veracity of Him *who cannot lie*, seems to stand pledged to assure us that he has, agreeably to his promises, conferred a superior degree of glory on those, whose sufferings for the truth, and whose faith and patience in this life, were most conspicuous. Surely it will give us more exalted views of the faithfulness and love of JEHOVAH, to know that he has bestowed the greatest rewards on those, who were distinguished for the greatest virtues; that the faith of an Abraham, the meekness of a Moses, the patience of a Job, the zeal of a Paul, and the fidelity of that host of apostles and martyrs, who suffered, *not accepting deliverance*, have been rewarded with a greater measure of bliss and glory. But to know this, it seems necessary that we should know the persons thus distinguished.

Again: we may reasonably suppose that a considerable part of the happiness of the saints will arise from a retrospection of those trials and difficulties which they have mutually undergone, and

through which GOD has so mercifully conducted them. It must certainly be a delightful employment, and calculated to increase their gratitude and joy, for those who have travelled together through life, sharing in each other's cares and sorrows, *enduring* the same *fight of afflictions*, and struggling against the same temptations, to retrace the scenes through which they have passed, and to contrast their former *light afflictions*, with their present *eternal weight of glory*. We are warranted, therefore, in saying that this doctrine is in accordance with the soundest dictates of *reason*.

Let us now see what intimations we have of it in *Scripture*. To my own mind, the text alone, which says that hereafter we shall *see face to face*, and *know even as we are also known*, is a conclusive argument in its favor. There are, however, some other passages evidently implying that departed spirits will know each other, and be happier for that knowledge. Thus we read that when David's child was dead, he consoled himself with the reflection that he himself should hereafter go to the same place, whither the spirit of his infant had gone: *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.** Yet this reflection could be no source of comfort to the Israelitish monarch, under his present bereavement, unless he had expected to meet, and recognise, his child again.

At the time of our Savior's transfiguration on the Mount, when he appeared in his matchless glory, Moses and Elias also appeared in the glorified bodies with which all the saints in light will hereafter be clothed. And their being known by those apostles, who were with our LORD at the time, is a clear intimation that the saints will know each other in a future state.

But a still more conclusive passage—and the only one which I shall now notice—is to be found in St. Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians. *For what*, he asks, *is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our* LORD JESUS CHRIST *at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.*† Here, this great apostle evidently anticipates with delight, the time when he should present these persons before the throne, "as the

* 2. Sam. xii. 23. † 1. Thess., ii. 19. 20

seals," to borrow the language of the pious Doddridge, "which God had been pleased to set to his labors, and as amiable friends, in whose converse and love he hoped to be forever happy."

On this text the learned Dr. McKnight thus beautifully remarks: "the manner in which the apostle speaks of the Thessalonians, shows that he expected to know his converts at the day of judgment. If so, we may hope to know our relations and friends then. And, as there is no reason to think, that in the future life we shall lose those natural and social affections, which constitute so great a part of our present enjoyment, may we not expect that these affections, purified from every thing animal and terrestrial, will be a source of our happiness in that life likewise? It must be remembered, however, that in the other world we shall love one another, not so much on account of the relation and friendship which formerly subsisted between us, as on account of the knowledge and virtue which we possess. For among rational beings, whose affections will all be suited to the high state of moral and intellectual perfection, to which they shall be raised, the most endearing relations and warmest friendships will be those which are founded on excellence of character. What a powerful consideration this, to excite us to cultivate in our relations and friends, the noble and lasting qualities of knowledge and virtue, which will prove such a source of happiness to them, and to us, through the endless ages of eternity!"

To this doctrine I know of but one considerable objection. If it be true that departed spirits know each other, will it not be a source of unhappiness to the Christian to find that many, whom he had loved on earth, are not among the number of the blessed in heaven; and consequently, that they must be in a state of everlasting wretchedness and despair! This objection, if it have any weight, will apply with equal force to our knowing, as we certainly must know, that any part of the human family has been condemned to eternal punishment. At the great day of final account we shall all behold a lasting separation made between the righteous and the wicked; yet it cannot be supposed that the condemnation of the latter, will, in the least degree, disturb the felicity of the former. To this it may be added that the omniscient

JEHOVAH, whose *tender mercies are over all his works*,—the Divine Redeemer, who *came into the world to save sinners*, and the blessed angels, who now rejoice when *one sinner repenteth*,—have all a perfect knowledge of the sufferings of the wicked; yet can we, for a moment, think that they are less happy for such knowledge? And why may it not be the same with respect to the glorified saints?

The truth appears to be this: we shall then have such enlarged views of GOD'S holiness, wisdom, and justice,—we shall so clearly discern the reasons for the condemnation of the wicked,—as fully to acquiesce in their sentence, and adore the justice which punishes them, not less than the mercy which spares us. We may, therefore, easily conceive that it will add much to the Christian's happiness to meet many of his friends in heaven, while the reflection that some, whom he loved on earth, are not there, will not be permitted to mar his felicity.

I proceed to consider the practical uses and application of this doctrine. He who thinks it of no practical importance, and that it can have no influence on our conduct through life, has little knowledge of the human heart, and is a stranger to the kindliest feelings, and the holiest charities, of our nature.

Not such the views of HIM, who, when about to be separated from his beloved disciples on earth, assured them of their reunion in heaven. With what affectionate earnestness does he press upon them this consolatory truth! *Let not your hearts be troubled; in my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you;* THAT WHERE I AM THERE YE MAY BE ALSO. What else could have reconciled the followers of CHRIST to so painful a separation? What else could have cheered their hearts under every difficulty and danger, and enabled them to embrace death in its most horrid forms,—but the firm belief, and assured expectation, that, whenever they departed, they should BE WITH CHRIST?

Was it not, think you, a cheering declaration to the penitent thief upon the cross, pronounced by One who held *the keys of death and hell—This day shalt thou be* WITH ME *in paradise!*

Did the Israelitish monarch derive no consolation from the pros-

pect of a reunion with his beloved child, when he uttered that feeling exclamation, before mentioned, *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me?*

Think not, then, that this doctrine is of no practical importance. Every friend, *who dies in the* LORD, adds but another tie to heaven.—The hope of being reunited to them in the other world awakens our sluggish zeal, and excites us to press forward the more earnestly towards the mark, for that prize which they have already attained.

Say, ye who now weep over the mouldering ashes of a pious friend,—ye who have ever dropped a tear into the grave of one dear to you as your own soul,—has not their departure to the world of spirits disposed you to make a more diligent preparation to follow them? Has it not excited you to greater care and watchfulness, lest the separation should prove eternal? As a child, have you not been cheered by the prospect of a reunion with your sainted parents? As a parent, have you not joyfully anticipated a meeting with the disembodied spirits of your children? As a husband, or wife, have you not looked forward with delight to the moment when you should rejoin the partner of your bosom? As an affectionate brother, or sister, or friend, have you not longed for an inseparable union with those with whom you *took sweet counsel* here; and ardently prayed that it might be said of you as it was of Saul and Jonathan, *they were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided?*

Oh! if there is a delightful scene on earth, it is that of a pious family, going hand in hand together to the same mansions of everlasting rest—cheering each other with the hopes and consolations of religion—animating each other's faith, and smoothing life's rough and thorny path with mutual helps and reciprocal affections. It is here they have commenced that happy union, which they hope to continue more perfectly in heaven. And as often as death enters their dwelling, and their little social circle narrows, they console themselves with the thought that, in another world, their happiness will be perfect, and their union indissoluble.

And how ought this thought to excite us to labor the more earnestly for the salvation of those with whom we are now connected!

The attachments of kindred and affection—all the domestic charities which make life pleasant, and death painful—every one who is stamped with the form of humanity must have felt. Surely, if these ties are dear to us now, it is our interest, not less than our duty to do all in our power to make them lasting as eternity. Let these hopes, therefore, which the Gospel inspires, exert their proper influence on our lives. Let them teach us to be perfectly resigned to the departure of our Christian friends, and incite us to make diligent preparation to follow them, whenever it shall please GOD to call us. Let us often call to mind the blessedness of *the dead, who die in the* LORD, and endeavor, through the assistance of Divine grace, to fit ourselves for a participation in their glories and their joys. Amid all the cares, and afflictions, and temptations of this mortal life, let us consider the glorious *cloud of witnesses* which surround us, and *run with patience the race that is set before us; looking unto* JESUS, *the author and finisher of our faith.* Let it be our constant endeavor "to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life," that so we may be prepared for admission into his immediate presence, where we shall *see face to face, and know even as we are known.* Associated there with the wisest and best beings in the universe, our knowledge and happiness will be continually increasing. We shall drink of the fountain of living waters, be fed with the fruit of the tree of life—and, throughout the rolling ages of eternity, shall participate in all the unspeakable bliss and glory of that heaven where there is *fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.*

"REMEMBER THE DEAD."

Who ever look'd upon yon starry spheres,
  Which brightly shine from out the dark blue sky,
Nor call'd to mind the friends of other years,
The hopes, the joys, the transient smiles and tears,
  Gushing from out where buried memories lie,
  And waking the full heart to highest ecstacy!

Oh, what a glorious vision, when the moon,
  Silently gliding through her pathless way,
Has reached the extremest point of her high noon,
Shedding o'er this our earth her radiant boon,
  While twinkling stars, and orbs of steadier ray,
  Shine with a light that mocks the intenser glare of day!

Oh, who has ever gazed on such a scene,
  Nor thought the spirits of the blest were there?
Who, that beholds not in that blue serene,
Bright isles, the abodes of pleasures yet unseen,
  Except by those who, freed from mortal care,
  Have winged their raptur'd flight to realms of upper air?

The mother, who has watched with sleepless eye
  Her babe, and rocked with tireless foot the while,
And when she saw the little sufferer die,
Bow'd her meek head and wept in agony,
  Fancies she hears, in yonder starry isle,
  Her little cherub's voice, and sees his angel smile.

Oh, ye departed spirits of my sires,
  And ye, the loved ones of my childhood's days,
While now I look on yonder heavenly fires,
Methinks I hear you tune your seraph lyres,
  Methinks I see you bend your pitying gaze
  On him who still must tread alone earth's gloomy maze!

Thou angel spirit, who so oft didst sing
  My infant cares to sleep upon thy breast,
Let me but hear the rustling of thy wing,
Around thy child its guardian influence fling!
  Oh, come thou from the islands of the blest,
  And bear my weary soul up to thy sainted rest!

Can we forget departed friends? Ah, no!
  Within our hearts their memory buried lies;
The thought that where they are, we too shall go,
Will cast a light o'er darkest scenes of woe;—
  For to their own blest dwellings in the skies,
  The souls whom CHRIST sets free, exultingly shall rise.

B. D.

ON A FUTURE STATE OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS:

A Sermon

BY THE REV. WILLIAM H. HART,

RECTOR OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, WALDEN, ORANGE COUNTY, NEW YORK.

Matthew xxv. 46.—"*And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.*

The doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, which is every where set forth in the Gospel, is of most serious importance, and calculated to make the deepest impression upon the mind of every human being. A doctrine which our blessed Savior was at peculiar pains to inculcate, as if determined that none should fall into error of life, through misapprehension of what shall be hereafter. A doctrine set forth in the plainest and most decisive terms, in order that, on a subject of such vast moment, we might be fully and clearly instructed. Indeed, so plain and unequivocal is the language of the Gospel, in relation to this subject, that not one of us will ever be able to plead ignorance in excuse, and if any of us should hereafter meet the condemnation of the wicked, his punishment will be aggravated by the reflection, that he sinned with his eyes open, and violated the righteous laws of a most holy God, with a perfect knowledge of the horrible results. Nothing can be more interesting to the heart of man, or more calculated to exercise a powerful influence over the life and conversation of this present scene, than the subject now proposed, and which ought frequently to be the theme of serious and solemn meditation. Agreeably to the whole tenor of the Gospel, we learn, that when the breath of man shall cease from his nostrils, when his corporeal frame shall undergo that great and mysterious change created by death, his soul, his spiritual and immortal part, shall still survive. Being freed from its tenement of clay, it shall remain in a state of conscious existence, until the time appointed by the Father for the consummation of all things. Then, at the sound of the archangel's trump, the bodies of men, which

have long slumbered in the dust, shall be roused to newness of life; freed from their grosser particles, and prepared for the reception of the soul immortal. Then shall they all be summoned before "the judgment seat of CHRIST," to receive their *final* sentence, according to the deeds done in the body,—and, according to the sentence which will *then* be pronounced, the destiny of every human soul will be fixed *forever*. The wicked *shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* In the chapter from which our text is taken, our Savior gives a circumstantial account of the dread ceremonies of the *great* day, *when the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.* The scene which will *then* follow, we shall not attempt to describe, convinced that when the awful day shall arrive, all human descriptions will be found to be beggared by the *reality*. In the simple language of the Redeemer, *Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* Passing by the truly interesting transactions of that *great* day, we propose to employ a few moments in directing your attention to the final results, and may GOD grant, that while we meditate on the blessedness which awaits the righteous in the life to come, and the *tremendous* consequences of guilt, as shown in the condemnation of the wicked, we may be induced to flee from the *one*, and obtain the *other*.

That we may treat the subject in proper order, it may be necessary to remark, that, agreeably to the tenor of Scripture, we are taught to believe, that ere the foundations of the world were laid, there existed an infinite number of created, celestial intelligences, which we denominate angels, dwelling in the presence of GOD, and blessed beyond compare, in the participation of his glory.

That one of these, elevated in dignity above the rest, became possessed with pride and ambition, rebelled against the authority of his Maker, incurred the divine wrath, and, together with an innumerable company of his followers, was cast out from the presence of GOD, and doomed to dwell for ever in outer darkness. Thus GOD *spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. The angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation,* GOD *hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* We also learn that after the creation of the world, this chief of evil spirits—this prince of darkness, seduced our first parents from their allegiance to the GOD of Heaven, and involved them, along with himself, in one common and everlasting ruin. That in mercy to our fallen race, GOD devised a way of escape, through the blood of the atonement, by which all who believe in CHRIST shall finally be restored to divine favor, and readmitted to the presence of GOD in Heaven; while those who reject the offers of reconciliation, shall remain under condemnation, and be doomed to dwell with devils and damned spirits in the place of eternal torment; *and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* Such, as briefly stated, being the situation in which we stand—such being the *inevitable* results which await our probationary state on earth, it becomes matter of deepest interest and concern to inquire into the nature, extent and duration of those rewards and punishments, which, on the dissolution of our mortal frame, must thus be awarded to every soul of man, and it should cause every one in this assembly tremblingly and *earnestly* to inquire of his heart, which of these states and conditions of being is to be my future lot? O may the question come home to every heart, and induce us to rest not satisfied, till we obtain a satisfactory answer!

In examining the Scriptures, in relation to the subject now before us, we perceive that the punishments of the wicked in a future state, are set forth in terms suited to the capacities and apprehensions of men. As we can form no idea of invisible things, except by comparison with those that are visible, it became neces-

sary for the inspired writers, in their revelations concerning the eternal world, to represent the torments of the damned, under the similitude of objects with which we are conversant and familiar upon earth. Yet the very comparisons introduced—the very terms made use of, serve to impress the mind with the solemn and *startling* conviction, that no object on earth—no power of language, can fully represent, or describe the intensity of suffering which the wicked will undergo. They carry us to the full extent of human imagination, and there leave us, convinced that after all that has been said, no eye of man hath seen, nor ear heard, nor heart hath conceived, the height, and depth, and length, and breadth. In order to appreciate the descriptions which we find in the sacred writings, so far as our feeble understandings can appreciate them, we must bear in mind that they relate to the awful realities of a spiritual and immaterial world, and therefore are to be taken in a figurative and not in a literal sense. It would be absurd to suppose, for a moment, that in the world of spirits there are actually *furnaces of fire*, and *chains of iron*, and *lakes of fire and brimstone;* but we are to understand, that by the pains and torments which these material substances are capable of inflicting upon our mortal bodies, are faintly represented the horrors of a condemning conscience—the tortures of a soul that is banished forever from the presence of its GOD. Neither are we to understand that there is any particular place, any specified location in nature, that is destined to receive the condemned soul, as the place of its torment; for this would be inconsistent with the language of Scripture in other respects. But we are taught to believe, that an accusing and condemning conscience, the remembrance of despised mercies, the abiding sense of divine wrath, and the utter hopelessness of ever obtaining the beatitudes of heaven, will constitute the torments of the wicked—and were such a soul to gain admittance even into the centre of heaven, so to speak, it would carry its hell along with it, and would remain equally and forever miserable. The more deeply and intently we reflect on this subject, the more we perceive, that there must be something in the condition and mode of existence of a disembodied spirit, of which we can now form no adequate conception; and while we keep this in mind, we

shall be better able to avoid superstition and absurdity, and to entertain some idea of the spirituality, both of the rewards and punishments that will be allotted to us in a future state.

Such, my brethren, is the *nature* of those punishments which will overwhelm the guilty soul, in the great day of retribution, and with this view of the subject, we will proceed to consider the *extent* and *duration* of those punishments, as they are set forth in the sacred writings.

And first, as to their *extent.* As the Scriptures declare it to be impossible for the mind of man to conceive the extent of happiness which awaits the righteous, so we may consider it equally impossible to conceive the extent of misery which awaits the wicked. To be cast out and banished from the presence of GOD. To be deprived of the glorious light of Heaven. To be compelled to associate with devils, and all evil spirits, in that outer darkness through which no ray of light can ever penetrate—to be continually subject to the accusations of a condemning conscience—to be abandoned to the uncontrolled dominion of every evil passion—to witness afar off the blessedness of the saints in light, and to know that that blessedness is lost for ever,—these will create a horror and despair which it is not in the power of man to describe or imagine. The only idea which we can form of the sufferings which the sinner will be doomed to undergo, must be drawn from sensible objects, and these, as represented in Scripture, serve rather to show that no power of human language, or thought, can reach the reality. The torments of the damned are represented, in the first place, under the similitude of a devouring fire. As we can hardly imagine a more exquisite torture than that which is inflicted upon the body by the action of fire, so this is used to express the torment which the just judgment of GOD will inflict upon the soul of the sinner. *The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom, all things which offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. It is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet, to be cast*

into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched—where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched. He will gather the wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. The LORD *thy* GOD *is a consuming fire. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living* GOD. *For fiery indignation shall devour the adversaries. The devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever. And whosoever was not found written in the Lamb's book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.* Such will be the effect of divine wrath, that the soul will shrink under it, as every object in nature shrinks under the influence of a devouring flame. The soul, under condemnation, is represented by the prisoner, immured in a dungeon and loaded with fetters of iron. We can hardly conceive a situation more truly deplorable, than that of the poor criminal confined within the dark and gloomy walls of his prison, and doomed to drag out his life under a load of chains. *And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* The torments of hell are represented by the pains and distresses which are inflicted upon the human body by disease. Their effects upon the soul, are like the gnawings of the worm which consumes the dead body, with this difference, that the body is soon consumed, but the soul can never die. In short, every distress and every anguish which we are capable of enduring in this life, is made use of to show forth the anguish and horror that will overwhelm the guilty soul. GOD is represented as filled with wrath and indignation against the wicked, not that such emotions can ever have power to disturb the peace and blessedness of the ALMIGHTY, but that we may understand the weight of woe which will be the lot of those who will be rejected by GOD in the great day of account. Oh who can endure the wrath of an offended GOD? who can dwell with everlasting burnings? who can sustain the misery and torment of the condemned soul, so powerfully represented by the language of Scripture? What will be the horror, the agony, and despair, that will seize upon the guilty soul, when

the decree of eternal banishment will be thundered from the throne of judgment? Which of you, my brethren, will be the subjects of this dreadful sentence? O! deal candidly, I beseech you, with your own hearts, and judge yourselves now, that ye be not judged hereafter. Take warning from the subject now before us, and be assured that, however you may now disregard it, the day is advancing—that awful day which no mortal can avoid, when the blessings of heaven, or the pains and torments of hell, must be awarded to every human soul. Knowing the terrors of the LORD, we endeavor to persuade men, and O! that you could be persuaded so to reflect upon the tremendous consequences of guilt, as seen in the future punishments of the wicked, as to use all diligence to make your calling and election sure; and by timely repentance and amendment of life, to escape the threatened vengeance of a just and holy GOD! Our ideas of those future punishments which await the wicked in the world to come, are heightened beyond compare, by the solemn reflection that they can never know an end. *These shall go away into* EVERLASTING *punishment. Dreadful* as will be the weight of that punishment—a weight, which, if laid upon mortal man for one instant, would crush him to earth, still it must last *forever*,—and when millions of ages shall have passed by, still the condemned soul must endure its torment, and must continue to endure, without the least prospect, without a shadow of hope, that it will ever experience the *least* mitigation! And however men may attempt to explain away terms of Scripture, and to establish the opinion that hell is but a temporary purgatory, still the word of GOD is sure, and cannot be broken, and it impresses upon the pains of hell, as well as the joys of heaven, the awful character of *eternity!* They are declared to be *eternal* and *everlasting;* and there can be but one meaning justly attached to those most ominous words. Oh how awful the idea, that, according to the decisions of the day of judgment, so must our condition be through an endless eternity. What must be the horror and despair of the soul which, in the midst of its torment, can see no end!—which looks forward through eternity, as over a boundless ocean, which contains no friendly shore—no place of rest, where the weary soul may gain a respite from its pain and woe. Not a ray of hope—not a beam of consolation can penetrate

the gloom, to alleviate the horrors of despair. Oh who of us will ever be placed in this awful condition? Who of us will descend into the bottomless pit, there to endure this exquisite misery—this dreadful despair—this eternity of torment! It is a question of most solemn import—and Oh, how should our souls tremble at the bare possibility, that we may be included in the number of those unhappy ones. How should the mere supposition of it, rouse us from our slumbers, and lead us to call upon GOD for his help, and to put forth all our strength, that we may escape the wrath to come. It will be unnecessary for us here, had we time to do it, to describe the blessed estate of those, who will hereafter be admitted to the joy of their LORD. The happiness which awaits the righteous, is represented in Scripture as inconceivable and perfect in degree, and eternal in duration,—and we might dwell with rapture and delight on the happy condition of those who will be permitted to dwell in the presence of their GOD—in that presence where is fulness of joy for evermore.

Thus, brethren, *life* and *death*, *heaven* and *hell*, are set before you. *Heaven*, with all its attendant joys and beatitudes, and *hell*, with all its horrors, its misery, and despair. One of these two conditions must be *your* everlasting portion. Now is your time to determine what shall be your future lot, and may GOD, in infinite mercy, incline your hearts to choose aright. Can you endure the thought, that in hell you will lift up your eyes, "being in torment?" That you will cast your longing gaze toward heaven, the place of everlasting blessedness,—that you will there behold the companions of your earthly pilgrimage, and those who were *near* and *dear* to you in life, happy in the enjoyment of their Father's love, while you will be compelled to *feel* and to *know* that that happiness you can never enjoy? Does not your soul shrink within itself at the very thought? Oh, why should you be idle, and careless, while such an alternative lies before you? Why should you risk the safety of your immortal soul, when you know that such awful consequences must ensue. May GOD enable you to perceive the danger of neglecting his "great salvation," and incline your hearts to come to CHRIST, that you may "have life." And may the solemn—the emphatic words of our text ever dwell in your minds and quicken your resolves.

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS,

OR,

THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

All ye that love the LORD, rejoice,
  And let your songs be new;
Amidst the church with cheerful voice,
  His later wonders show.

When CHRIST His judgment seat ascends,
  And bids the world appear,
Thrones are prepared for all his friends,
  Who humbly lov'd him here.

Then shall they rule with iron rod,
  Nations that dar'd rebel;
And join the sentence of their GOD,
  On tyrants doom'd to hell.

Saints should be joyful in their king,
  E'en on a dying bed;
And like the souls in glory sing,
  For GOD *shall raise the dead!*

The LORD takes pleasure in the just,
  Whom sinners treat with scorn;
The meek that lie, despis'd, in dust,
  Salvation shall adorn.

THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL PULPIT.

SERMON BY THE REV. SAMUEL H. TURNER, D. D.

VOL. II.) OCTOBER, 1832. (NO. X.

ON OCCASION OF

THE MATRICULATION OF A NEW CLASS,

IN NOVEMBER 1828, WAS DELIVERED IN THE CHAPEL,

A Sermon

BY THE REV. SAMUEL H. TURNER, D. D.,

PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LEARNING AND THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE, IN THE GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

Luke xii. 48.—*Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.*

In all the discourses of our Lord and Master, and in all the parables and other illustrations, whereby he endeavors to place the principles of his religion in a clear light, or to bring them home to the consciences of his hearers, there is a good sense and plain practical character, which come at once to the bosom of every honest inquirer after truth and obligation. Although, occasionally, he involves the sentiments which he means to convey in the garb of allegory, which the careless observer could not immediately see through, and would not take the pains to withdraw; yet even then, the man whose mind was alive to the importance of the instruction, and who was conscious that he had himself a personal interest of the deepest kind in understanding and applying the truths communicated, could not fail both to perceive their tendency and to feel their force.

Of the vast multitude of instances which confirm the former of these remarks, the plain declaration of the text is prominent. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." There is no man who is not sensible of the truth here conveyed, and who does not, as far as his authority extends, make it the principle whereby to regulate his demands upon others. Justice recognises its applicability, and it would be inconsistent with what the Scriptures teach, and reason confirms to us, respecting the God of the universe, not to suppose, that by this equitable prin-

ciple his conduct towards all his creatures will, in the end, be perceived to be governed.

This general application of our LORD'S words would, very naturally, suggest a variety of remarks adapted to various classes of Christians. In the first place, it would address to the whole body this powerful consideration, that, inasmuch as they enjoy religious privileges infinitely superior to those of the rest of mankind, they are bound to live better lives, and to do more good in the world. In the second place, it would apply, with peculiar force, to that portion of the Christian community, whose talents, or character, or influence in society, or wealth, affords facilities for usefulness not possessed by others; and it would teach such the practical lesson, that they ought to do much for the interests of religion, and to advance the cause of Christianity, simply because GOD hath put much in their power, and will, most undoubtedly, adapt his requirements to the ability and opportunity of usefulness which he hath granted.

It would be easy to give the text this general direction. But it has been selected with a view to a less extended application, more immediately suited to the present occasion. As it has become my duty to deliver a discourse in reference to the matriculation of a new class in the Seminary, I have thought it not inexpedient to call the attention of its members to the principle recognised in the text, in order to present to them a sketch of the advantages which they enjoy, and to embrace the opportunity of inculcating that course of conduct which is consequently obligatory. May the great Master, who will not fail to reward those servants who improve the five or the two talents with which he hath entrusted them, nor, on the other hand, to punish the unprofitable servant who buries his lord's money, grant us his grace, that the words now to be delivered "may not be spoken in vain."

The truth that "much is given," which is evidently implied in the language of the text, shall, in the first place, be considered as particularly applicable to students of divinity, at the present time, in our own country. And secondly, the inference that "much shall be required," shall be illustrated and enforced.

I. Different periods in the history of the Christian Church have been distinguished by more than ordinary attention to religion, and various objects connected with it, and tending to facilitate its progress. The zeal with which the apostles and other primitive Christians spent their lives in promoting the advancement of the Gospel—some by preaching its salutary doctrines to the ignorant and unenlightened, and others by extending a knowledge of that blessed book, the truths of which are able to make wise unto salvation, either by translating it into the languages of the converts, or by illustrating its contents—will bear down their names to remotest generations, and afford a perpetual example of imitation for all, in every age, who are called by the name of CHRIST. The ardor, which led on the reformers, both on the Continent and in England, to tear down the confused and shapeless mass of materials which the superstition of ages had raised, and to substitute that chaste and beautiful temple, which the great GOD of the universe would not disdain to inhabit, cannot but recal to our minds emotions of grateful veneration for the men to whom we are so vastly indebted, and fill our hearts with thankfulness to the Author of all good, by whose "holy inspiration" they were led to attempt the arduous task, and by whose "merciful guiding" they were enabled to persevere until it was crowned with success. And if these men were "the lights of the world" in their day, pouring forth those streams of knowledge and happiness which have come even to us, they have not been without successors, who have added to the flame, and brightened the torch of Christian truth and virtue. The period in which we live is among the most distinguished which the Church, since the age of the apostles, and of apostolic men, has ever witnessed. The terrible inundation of error and vice with which English deism and French infidelity flooded a great part of Christendom, does appear to have had an indirect influence in opening the sources of evangelical benevolence, and in swelling and deepening the streams, which are to pour the waters of life into the most barren soil, making it productive of the richest fruits of the Gospel. Whatever opinion different persons may entertain respecting some of those channels of beneficence, which the religious philanthropy of the day has pre-

pared, or in whatever light we may view their comparative merits, it is impossible for a candid mind to deny, that a more than ordinary influence of Christian principle and feeling is discernible in labors plainly intended to promote the kingdom of GOD among men. And among the various efforts by which our own age will hereafter be distinguished, the advancement of the ministerial character, in the all-important requisites of piety, learning, prudence, and zeal for the cause of the Redeemer, to which religious and intelligent Christians have directed their attention, is one, which, if judiciously prosecuted, must have a most beneficial result, because of the powerful influence, either salutary or injurious, which the ministry will always exercise. With a view to this important object, Theological Seminaries have been established, and our Church has instituted and patronises that to which we belong.

On the 26th of May, 1817, the General Convention resolved to found a General Theological Seminary, and a course of instruction was commenced in this city, in the early part of the year 1819, from which time until the present, the institution has continued in operation under various circumstances. It is not my intention to give a history of the Seminary; these facts have been stated merely to introduce some particulars which may illustrate the advantages it affords to students of Theology.

In the first place, it offers facilities for a successful prosecution of study.

1. The candidate for the ministry who resides within the building, and who is disposed to devote his time to the acquisition of theological knowledge, has the advantage of retirement. Within these walls his time is his own, and he can improve it to any degree he pleases, without much danger of interruption from the indolent, who, not knowing how to fill up the vacuity which makes him uneasy, wastes the precious hours which the industrious would gladly devote to reading and meditation. A student who lives at home, is very often subjected to interruptions, arising from necessary intercourse with members of his family, or circles of his friends, or occasional and temporary acquaintance; and these the proper decorum of life will not permit him to neglect. Here, he is exempt from these inconveniences and many more, and

all his time, except what is required for relaxation, (and this it is always the best policy thus to appropriate,) may be spent in study and devotion.

2. The candidate, who pursues his studies in connection with the Seminary, possesses another advantage in having access to a good library. It is not often that an institution so young as our own, can show a catalogue of books, so many of which are exceedingly valuable, and some so scarce as seldom to be found even in public libraries.* For many of the rarest and most costly we are indebted to a citizen, whose heart never fails to warm when an object of Christian philanthropy is presented before it, and whose good sense and intelligence have taught him to appreciate theological literature, and to put within the student's reach, many of those volumes in which the learned industry and the profoundest thought of ages are embodied.† To examine subjects in their original sources ought to be aimed at as far as possible, because to see with our own eyes, and to know from personal inspection, that a fact is so, not only gives us the greater security, but makes our knowledge more accurate and impresses it more forcibly upon the mind. There is, therefore, no small benefit in being placed in circumstances which make this, in some measure, practicable. I say, in some measure, for the limited number of our books must of course restrict such examination, at least in an equally limited degree.

3. The various points which come under review, can only be touched on. I therefore proceed to mention another advantage of the Seminary; that which arises from mutual intercourse subsisting among the students. There is a benefit in pursuing a course of study in connection with others, because each may contribute his aid in removing difficulties, and from daily intercourse and discussion the operations of several minds are elicited, and brought to bear upon the point under consideration. This is too well known

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* The Complutensian Polyglot may be mentioned as one.

† I allude to JOHN PINTARD, Esq., to whom we are indebted for a very large proportion of the most valuable works; among which are the Paris Polyglot, and that just mentioned.

to students of all ages and professions, to require any illustration; and the very difficulties which are started, and objections which are urged, as well as the various views presented, may be made, by an observant and intelligent student, highly conducive to his improvement, by suggesting reflections illustrative of the subject, or at least beneficial to the mind. To this may be added also, an advantage which might be made very considerable: let the more advanced student, in private conversation, communicate freely with his brother of a lower class on the topics which he had already studied, taking notice of the points more particularly difficult, and of the solutions which had appeared to him to be most satisfactory. While to the one this would impart useful information, it would be to the other a review of past studies, no less beneficial.

4. This part of my subject could not be concluded without referring to the benefit which must accrue in prosecuting a course of theology with the aid afforded by professors. When instruction is given by men who have devoted a considerable portion of their time to an examination of the subjects with which they are entrusted, and when each has his own particular department assigned him, to which his private studies can be directed without distracting his mind by many and various objects, it is evident that they may and ought to bring to the points to be studied, a respectable portion of information; and, where the nature of the cases does not make it particularly difficult, correct opinions formed by good and fair inference from such grounds. It is not too much to expect this. Neither is it too much to say, that this constitutes an advantage of no moderate kind. Students of other professions are eager to avail themselves of the assistance of learned and laborious men, who have applied the experience afforded by the day, and the mental vigor of the night, to ascertain truth in order to become practically useful. If the subject to be studied be comprehensive, if it embrace many and diversified branches of learning, if it require combination of thought in forming which a mind not above mediocrity may readily err, and, above all, if here more than in any other department of knowledge, error be prejudicial, then it is a matter of vast importance, that the student should

avail himself of the best assistance that can be procured. And it is well known that these characteristics are especially applicable to the subjects comprehended in a course of divinity, where, in points not essential to the Gospel, as a system necessary to be believed, and even in the manner of maintaining those which are thus essential, there is so much room for diversity of views, and so much probability that minds not well disciplined by thorough education, will fall into error, either by inconclusive reasoning from sound and sufficient principles, or by logical inference drawn from partial and imperfect knowledge. The aid, then, of those who have given to these points a more than ordinary degree of attention, is undoubtedly important.

In these respects, as well as in others which could be mentioned, the Seminary does certainly offer facilities for a successful prosecution of study, which were not attainable by the candidate for the ministry in our Church, before its establishment. He possesses advantages which those can best appreciate who know them, and who know also what it is to have wanted them; those who have experienced the labor of toiling through the original languages of the Bible, groping their way in the dark, and advancing step by step, without any guide to direct them where to fix their eye upon one ray of light, or where to plant the foot with security, and consequently often making a wrong step and falling back into darkness and confusion; those who have wended their way among the mazes of that labyrinth of opinions which the affected wisdom of the foolish has built around the simple structure of truth; those who, in obedience to the rule of the apostle, would "examine all things," in order that they may "hold fast that which is good," but who, perplexed by a multiplicity of guides, and without entire confidence in any, cannot tell where to begin their course, nor after they have entered upon it, which of the multifarious paths to select, which afterwards present themselves; in these perplexities, they must be subjected to loss of time, to dissatisfaction with their acquisitions, to indefinite and uncertain perceptions, not to say, to many errors, which nothing but experience in the same course of study can effectually guard against or disperse.

5. In enumerating the facilities for study which the Seminary offers, there is another which I cannot prevail upon myself ot omit

I mean the diminution of expense to the student. It is possible that some may think this a very little subject to introduce in connection with what has been stated. But I am persuaded that no man of good sense will think so, after he considers how important it is that the mind of a student should be perfectly at ease with regard to pecuniary matters; when he reflects how hard it is to fix the thoughts upon the subject to be studied, when they are distressed and harrassed by difficulties of this nature, and how weak must be the impression which those subjects can produce in such circumstances. Those men, (whose best praise it is that they honor the Church to which they belong, and obey the practical requisitions of the religion they profess,) who, by giving donations in property or money, or by founding scholarships, have contributed, in a great degree, to remove these difficulties, are entitled to the warm gratitude of those who are indebted to their benefactions, and to the hearty thanks of the Church whose cause they have thus practically advocated.

In the second place, I proceed with as much brevity as possible to point out the advantages which the Seminary affords for improvement in religious character.

1. In the duties which a regular attendance on the Seminary course requires, it is made obligatory on every student to join in morning and evening devotions; which, however, is nothing more than is to be expected from the members of every well regulated Christian family. Attendance also on the service of the Lord's day is only a Christian duty. On these points, therefore, it would be irrelative to enlarge. But, for the information of those who are unacquainted with the arrangements of the institution, it cannot be considered as out of place to mention, that a weekly meeting is held for devotional and literary purposes, alternately, and that subjects of practical religion are brought forward, and with no other view than that of advancing evangelical piety, and of exciting in each bosom the flame of holy affection. To these stated exercises may be added, the effect of that mutual animation to the great purpose of the Gospel ministry, which cannot but result from pious intercourse. Does a young man come here, whose mind is not much enlightened by religious truth, whose soul is not deeply imbued with the savor of Christian piety, whose affec-

tions do not frequently mount up to that heaven where he must wish to dwell forever? does he enter on the study of divinity, because the profession of the clergy is respectable, without any very strong impression of the responsibilities it involves? Unless the number of such students predominates over that of the contrary character—which, may GOD of his mercy and love to his Church, forbid—the probability is considerable, that such may be influenced, by the piety of their brethren, to reflect more seriously on the solemnity of the office which they are about to undertake, and not to assume it uncalled and unqualified. The influence produced by a general tone of piety and Christian character, may not always be conspicuous or even acknowledged; but it will be felt, and will produce an effect, which in future life, when reflection becomes unbiassed, must be salutary.

2. And if the duties practised within the walls of the Seminary, and the associations subsisting therein, are such as cherish and cultivate a habit of devotion, there are also extraneous circumstances which have the same happy tendency. In this vicinity, a field of usefulness has presented itself, and it has been occupied with a spirit of zealous industry, which cannot be too warmly commended. More than a hundred children of the neighborhood have been formed into a Sunday school, which is not surpassed in the regularity of its arrangements, in the completeness of its course of instruction, and in the punctual and assiduous devotion of the teachers to its interests. Whether the efforts now making, will, by the good providence of GOD, result in the establishment in this growing part of the metropolis of a regularly organized Episcopal church, or whether other denominations of Christians will gather into their various folds those sheep, who, while tender lambs of the flock have drunk of our milk and fed on our pastures the preacher is unable, nor does his present purpose require him, to say.* But he feels himself called on to state, that the circum-

* It is with feelings of the highest gratification that I am now enabled to say, that a small and neat brick building has lately been erected near the Seminary, and was consecrated on Saturday the 5th of February, 1832, by the Right Reverend BENJAMIN T. ONDERDONK, D. D., to the service of Almighty GOD, under the name of the Chapel of the Protestant Episcopal Church of St. Peter. The Rev. B. I. HAIGHT, A. M., an alumnus of the Seminary, rector. The number of Sunday scholars on the books, now amounts to 420, and that of regular attendants to about 240.

stances alluded to have been seized by a large proportion of the resident students with an ardor, and pursued with a steadiness, which are honorable to their character as Christians, and which afford a pledge of future usefulness in the ministry. The duties which the Sunday School establishment necessarily brings along with it, of impressing religious instruction on the minds of the children, and visiting the parents and endeavoring to excite in them some regard to their everlasting interests, constitute a most excellent preparation for those which are required by the parish; and the candidate for the ministry, who has been trained in this school, as useful as it is humble, may well be supposed to bring to the ministerial office abilities and habits which will facilitate its duties, and increase his practical usefulness.

Without entering any further into detail, which the necessary limits of a discourse, rather than any want of materials, forbids, I trust that the first point proposed for discussion, has been made sufficiently prominent; to the student of divinity, in our own time and country, much is offered and "much is given." According to the equitable principle of the text, then, it is certain that from him "shall much be required." To illustrate and enforce this inference was the second point to be brought into view.

II. To the members of the Seminary the appeal of St. Peter applies with more than ordinary force;—"what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness!" "Much is given to you, and much shall be required."

1. In the first place, the Church in general has a right to require much. The general convention, which is the representative and highest ecclesiastical body of our Church, founded the Seminary, and has a superintending care of all who are connected with it. It cannot be that this religious assemblage, in part venerable for hoary wisdom, in part sacred by authority as ambassadors of CHRIST, in part dignified by character and standing among the highest ranks of the community, and altogether worthy of honor from the delegated rights which they meet to exercise, should look with indifference upon the conduct and qualities of those, who, in more respects than one, may well be denominated their children.

It is not to be doubted, that an eye of affection will be directed towards this place, and that the sons of the prophets will not be out of remembrance. God's holy Church, my brethren, assists your preparation for serving in her courts, and she will not fail to observe whether the talents she commits to you are improved or neglected. And after you shall have entered upon the work of the ministry, her solicitude will still be extended, and she will be anxious to know that you are workmen of whom she "needeth not to be ashamed."

2. The trustees of the institution have a right to expect much. They are the more immediate guardians of its interests, appointed by the proper authorities "for this very thing." It is an honorable charge with which they have been entrusted, and it cannot be supposed that they will regard it with indifference. It is to be presumed that they feel a deep and parental interest in whatever concerns the institution, and, of course, in those who are studying under its auspices. It is to be presumed, that, knowing in detail the whole course of study, the duties enjoined and the advantages connected with every part of it, they are best competent to form a proper and judicious estimate of the benefits that may be derived, and consequently they must have a proportionably clear view of the nature and extent of the claims which rest upon you. And if these claims are properly appreciated, and if this is shown to be the fact by your present attention to duty and future labors to be useful, there need be no stronger motive on them to continue their exertions. The proper direction through life, of those abilities which God hath given you, will be to them no insufficient reward.

3. Again:—the patrons of the Seminary, who contributed to its original establishment, and who have continued to support it in various ways, have a right to expect much. If some good men have given a part of the property with which God hath blessed them; if others have given, what is no less valuable, a portion of their time and superintending labors; others, the influence of their station, or of the talents with which he "who distributeth to each man severally as he will," hath endowed them; and all in order to advance the great work of qualifying young men for the ministry of the Gospel, that they may with more effect "call sinners to

repentance," and "prepare the way of the LORD;" is it not plain, that they may fairly and reasonably expect an equivalent for their money, or their land, or their laborious exertions, or their influence and talents, not returned to them as individuals, but to the Church of GOD, for the sake of which they gave them, and gave them to you? Holy men, who have felt the necessity of a Theological Seminary, for the welfare of the Church, and have therefore raised and supported one, look to the students of the Seminary for that joyful retribution which it lies with them to give, the retribution of zeal and industry in the Master's cause. Some of these men of GOD have gone to their reward in a better world; but if "the spirits of the just," released from the oppression of sin and the cares of the present state, may be supposed to look down with regard upon those beneficial objects which engaged their solicitude while on earth, it is possible that this school of the prophets may even now be remembered by them with affection. And that shepherd of the flock of JESUS, whose "face," beaming with intelligence and religious mildness, was looked upon by many "as it had been the face of an angel," who was never seen without the desire to know him, and never known by the Christian without an affectionate and reverent desire to be like him, may now in the mansions of blessedness, behold with complacency the institution which he did so much to establish, and for which his friends and his Church have uniformly cherished an affection.*

4. Lastly, my young brethren, GOD may reasonably expect much. If it be true that "in the day when GOD shall judge the secrets of men," "as many as have sinned under the law shall be condemned by the law;" and if it be equitable to require much of him to whom much is given; and further, if the "judge of all the earth" cannot but "do right;" then, provided the statements before made be admitted to be correct, he will demand much of you, be-

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* The regard which the diocese of South Carolina has uniformly shown for the Seminary, is one among many illustrations of the profound respect which they entertain for the memory of their late much beloved diocesan, Bishop DEHON. They cherish an affection for the object which lay so near the heart of that most estimable man, and venerated and holy prelate.

cause he hath given you much. Merciful God! forbid that these reasonable demands should, in any instance, fail of being complied with. You have voluntarily devoted yourselves to his service in the ministry of the Gospel; you have advantages in preparing for it of which the great proportion of the clergy were formerly destitute. The claim upon you is solemn, the call is loud.

In the conclusion, you will permit me to impress upon you the necessity of continuing to be studious. The whole period which the course requires is short; it is but three years. And how little of theology can be acquired, even by the most industrious, in three years, is well known by all who have applied themselves to it for half that time. Languages which, in an academical course, have been in many instances very imperfectly studied, are to be revived or improved; others, or at the least the Hebrew, are to be acquired; the Scriptures are to be studied, their criticism examined, their interpretation accurately and fundamentally settled and prudently applied; ecclesiastical history and church polity are to be investigated, the principles and facts which they disclose are to be weighed with sagacity and wisdom; Christian divinity is to be drawn from the Bible in its original sources, and formed into a coherent system; pastoral theology, comprehending whatever is necessary in the desk and pulpit, and out of them also, for the care of souls, is to be appreciated by the understanding and felt by the heart; all these subjects are comprised in a theological course, and well may it be said, that they are the study of a man's life, and that in three years not much more can be given than a sketch, which must afterwards be filled up and enlarged. Here, then, let it be yours to seize upon its prominent points, and to form a correct outline, that hereafter, as God may give you opportunity, the beautiful design may be completed in all its fair proportions.

Lastly, let me urge upon you, on the ground of the motives already introduced, to cultivate a spirit of exalted piety. The candidate for the ministry "must be conscious of being, as to inward character and outward conduct, an approved subject of that dispensation of grace of which it will be his duty to invite others to be partakers." This is the language of our Right Reverend President, in one of his addresses. Now he cannot be an approved

subject of that dispensation without personal religion; and as he is to illustrate this, and urge it upon others, he ought to possess it himself in a more than ordinary degree. It is a great and solemn service which he is about to undertake, and one which may well make a man tremble at the responsibility, after repeated self-examination. He that would enter on it with proper views and feelings, must discipline his mind by pious exercises; he must feel his own weakness and look up to the mighty GOD for assistance; he must engage his heart in frequent prayer, and by habitual devotion must acquire a heavenly temper of mind, leading him to estimate with moderation whatever has no immediate connection with the great end of man's being. The infinite value of the soul must be with him the paramount consideration, and to be instrumental in saving the souls of his fellow creatures, must be the governing principle of his life. My brethren, if this be the character which you are endeavoring to cultivate, we implore GOD'S blessing upon your efforts; and as, on the one hand, our LORD'S language, "to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required," brings to view your obligations; so, on the other, his gracious declaration, that "to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundance," must be an irresistible motive to improvement.

WHEN HE PUTTETH FORTH HIS OWN SHEEP, HE GOETH BEFORE THEM.—*John* x. 4.

(*Addressed to Candidates for Ordination.*)

"LORD in thy field I work all day,
I read, I teach, I warn, I pray,
And yet those wilful wandering sheep
Within thy fold I cannot keep.

"I journey yet no step is won—
Alas! the weary course I run!
Like sailors shipwreck'd in their dreams
All powerless and benighted seems."

What? wearied out with half a life?
Scared with this smooth, unbloody strife?
Think where thy coward hopes had flown
Had heaven held out the martyr's crown.

How could'st thou hang upon the cross
To whom a weary hour is loss?
Or how the thorns and scourging brook,
Who shrinkest from a scornful look?

Yet ere thy craven spirit faints,
Hear thine own King, the King of saints;
Though thou wert toiling in the grave,
'T is He can hear thee, He can save.

He is the eternal mirror bright
Where Angels view the FATHER's light,
And yet in him the simplest swain
May read his homely lessons plain.

Early to quit his home on earth,
And claim his high celestial birth,
Alone with his true Father found
Within the temple's solemn round:—

Yet in meek duty to abide
For many a year at Mary's side,
Nor heed, though restless spirits ask,
"What? hath the CHRIST forgot his task?"—

Conscious of deity within,
To bow before an heir of sin,
With folded arms on humble breast,
By his own servant wash'd and blest:—

Then full of heaven, the mystic Dove
Hovering his gracious brow above,
To shun the voice and eye of praise
And in the wild his trophies raise:—

With hymns of angels in his ears,
Back to his task of woe and tears,
Unmurmuring through the wild to roam
With not a wish or thought at home:—

All but himself to heal and save,
Till, ripen'd for the cross and grave,
He to his Father gently yield
The breath that our redemption seal'd:—

Then to unearthly life arise,
Yet not at once to seek the skies,
But glide awhile from saint to saint,
Lest on our lonely way we faint.

And through the cloud by glimpses show
How bright, in heaven, the marks will glow
Of the true cross, imprinted deep
Both on the Shepherd and the sheep:—

When out of sight, in heart and prayer
Thy chosen people still to bear,
And from behind thy glorious veil,
Shed light that cannot change or fail:—

This is thy pastoral course, O Lord,
Till we be saved and thou adored;—
Thy course and ours—but who are they
Who follow on the narrow way?

And yet of Thee from year to year
The Church's solemn chant we hear,
As from thy cradle to thy throne
She swells her high heart-cheering tone.

Listen ye pure white-robed souls,
Whom in her list she now enrols,
And gird ye for your high emprize
By these her thrilling minstrelsies.

And wheresoe'er, in earth's wide field,
Ye lift for Him the red-cross shield,
Be this your song, your joy and pride,
"Our Champion went before and died."

Keble's *Christian Year*

THE

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SERMON BY THE REV. GREGORY T. BEDELL, D. D.

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CHRIST CRUCIFIED:

A Sermon

BY THE REV. GREGORY T. BEDELL, D. D.,
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"We preach CHRIST crucified."—1 *Corinthians*, i. 23.

UNDER all circumstances this is an appropriate text for a Christian minister. If he sets out from this point, he may find a direct road to every truth of the Bible which stands essentially connected with the salvation of man; and let him light upon what truth he may in the whole circle of religion, he will find that from it, there is a direct and open road to this. If he does not set out from this, and attempts to reach any vital truth, he will find himself wandering in darkness, and he will eventually stumble and fall. But appropriate as this text is under all circumstances, it is remarkably adapted to the present occasion,* when our minds are naturally turned from the *doctrine* to the *fact*, and then from the fact back again upon the doctrine.

In the wise arrangements of our Church, my friends, we are all annually called to contemplate the stupendous transaction which, as on this day, took place on the mount of Calvary. It was there that the LORD JESUS CHRIST suffered the ignominious death of the cross, the purpose of which had been distinctly foretold years before its actual occurrence. But I have too much before me to-day to suffer my mind to be led back to the time of Isaiah and the Prophets. We have an absorbing present concern. Following the example of the apostle I say, "We preach CHRIST crucified"—and the divisions under which this discourse will be arranged are as follows:

* Good Friday.

I. What is this, "CHRIST crucified?"
II. Why do we preach it?

I. What is this? I offer you two ideas:

1. It is a FACT. What I mean by this is, that as a matter of history, there was such a person as JESUS CHRIST, who in the days of the emperor Augustus, and under the government of Pontius Pilate, suffered the death of the cross. Apart from all other circumstances, there is an historical interest attached to this fact, which makes it stand *sui generis* in the history of the world. About the year 4000, there appeared in Judea a man of austere habits, an unsocial man; one who loved the solitude of his own contemplations, and yet one who appeared forced into public life. And when he came forth before men, he announced himself in language strangely mysterious: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness; prepare ye the way of the LORD and make his paths straight,"—and he went about Judea, "crying repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." He did not appear solicitous to make converts to himself, for his speech was rough and discouraging: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come." But not long had this man been calling his countrymen to repentance, when there appeared ANOTHER still more mysterious, and when the *first one* saw him, he seemed struck by some unearthly vision, and he cried, "Behold the LAMB of GOD." In a little while we perceive his still more mysterious personage going about the land of Judea. Around him he attracted a few of the poor and illiterate fishermen from the lake of Gallilee, and with them he went the circuit of the land. The poor seemed to love him, for he healed their sick; there was a strange power about him to drive out disease, and death itself was not equal to his arm. By and bye his walk of love seems to have excited the indignation of the higher authorities, and he was watched and troubled, and his path beset with snares. Yet he gave no cause of offence; against the civil or ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the land he manifested no turbulent or rebellious spirit. "He was holy, and harmless, and separate from sinners;" he did no man wrong—he did all men kindness. But there was a mysterious grandeur about the benevolence of his

character which made him an object of hatred. Attempts upon attempts were made to bring him under the power of some law; but he violated none. Still his presence troubled the authorities, and there was no peace when he walked. Upon false pretences he was brought before an ecclesiastical court,—by perjured witnesses was he declared guilty of blasphemy, and dragged to the tribunal of the Roman power. No resistance did he make, no disapprobation did he evince; his countenance was as placid as the lake near which he had often walked when it reflected the softest hues of the summer's even. The judge on his seat pronounced him innocent; no real crime was charged; no crime was proven. Yet pronounced *innocent*, he was condemned as if guilty. This innocent man was made the sport of his persecutors: there were thorns placed upon his brow, and his face, which beamed with benignity, ran down with blood; stripes were laid upon his unresisting shoulders, and he murmured not; indignity upon indignity was offered him, and he made no reproaches. There was a calm, a holy calm, in his sufferings, which might have moved a heart of stone; but it could not move the infuriate hearts of his persecutors. This innocent man was led out from Jerusalem, bending beneath the weight of the instrument of his torture; he toiled up the hill of Calvary, and to the cross which he had carried was he nailed. And all this while this mysterious man made no complaints, no protests, no threats, no angry replies. There were a few words fell from his lips, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." In a short time he died and was buried. Thus was "CHRIST crucified,"—a FACT of history—a fact mysterious in all its circumstances—but a *fact* undoubted. When, then, according to the text, "we preach CHRIST crucified," we mean that we lay before you this *fact*.

But we lay before you this *fact* for the purpose of a further advancement, and on that fact,

2. We preach CHRIST crucified as a DOCTRINE. That is, the fact *teaches* us something; there are things of consummate importance connected with it, necessary that we should learn; and when we preach CHRIST crucified, we mean simply to bring before your minds the reason of this fact and the results which it

was intended to secure. "CHRIST crucified," as a *doctrine*, is, in its most simple form of expression, that method which a GOD of infinite purity and holiness has devised, by which he might extend pardon to his guilty and rebellious creatures. We mean by it, that the death of CHRIST was a satisfaction made to the Divine justice for the sins of mankind, the benefits of which we personally appropriate by faith in CHRIST, or the acceptance of him as a Savior; we mean that without this faith in CHRIST as a Divine Savior and sacrifice for sin, that faith which receives him as a Savior, we have no rational hope of Heaven. The Scripture representation is most emphatically summed up in the Articles and Liturgy of our Church. Let me call your attention to the language, "the offering of CHRIST once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual." (Article xxxi.) In the exhortation to the Communion, that ordinance is spoken of as to be by believers, "received in remembrance of his (CHRIST'S) meritorious Cross and Passion whereby *alone* we obtain remission of our sins and are made partakers of the kingdom of Heaven," and in another exhortation, "above all things ye must give most humble and hearty thanks to GOD, the FATHER, the SON and the HOLY GHOST, for the redemption of the world by the Death and Passion of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who did humble himself even to the death upon the cross, for us miserable sinners, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death; that he might make us the children of GOD, and exalt us to everlasting life:" and in the prayer of Consecration: "all glory be to thee, Almighty GOD, our Heavenly Father, for that thou of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son, JESUS CHRIST, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there (on the cross) by his one oblation of Himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

Were I to repeat the Scripture passages on which these quotations are founded, and where the doctrine is set forth in the words of inspiration, I should occupy your time far beyond the period allowed me. Suffice it to quote, "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is JESUS CHRIST," "there is no

other name under Heaven given among men whereby we may be saved but the name of JESUS CHRIST," "CHRIST came into the world to save sinners," "In whom we have redemption by his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins."

As this is the subject of my continued pulpit instructions, and as much of what is involved in the idea of "CHRIST crucified," as a doctrine, will be connected with my subsequent discussion, I shall pass on to my second division; which is the question,

II. Why do we preach this?—and the answer is,

1. Because we know of no other way of saving sinners. Other methods have been tried, but have always failed. On this subject, there is a method of placing the truth before you, which may serve a more important purpose than argument: It is the mere naked statement of facts. The following, is from a speech of one of our Indians, on the best method of converting the Heathen. "Brethren, I have been a Heathen myself, and grown old among them; I therefore know their modes of thinking. A preacher once came to us, desiring to instruct us; and began by proving to us that there was a GOD, on which we said to him, 'Well, and dost thou think we are ignorant of that? Go back to the place whence thou camest?' Then again another preacher came, and began to instruct us, saying, 'You must not steal, or become inebriated, or tell falsehoods, or lead abandoned lives.' We answered him; 'Thinkest thou that we know not that? Go and practically learn these things thyself, and then teach them to thine own people; for who are more addicted to such vices than they?' Thus we sent him away also. At length a missionary came to my hut, and sat down by me. The contents of his discourse were nearly these; 'I come to thee, in the name of the LORD of Heaven and earth. He sends me to acquaint thee, that he would gladly save thee, and make thee happy, and deliver thee from the miserable condition in which thou at present liest. To this end he became man; gave his life a ransom for man, and shed his blood for man; all that believe in the name of this JESUS, obtain the forgiveness of sins. To all that receive him by faith, he giveth power to become the sons of GOD. The HOLY SPIRIT

dwelleth in their hearts; and they are made free, through the blood of CHRIST from the slavery of sin. And though thou art the chief of sinners; yet, if thou prayest the Father in his name, and believest in him as the sacrifice for thy sins, thou shalt be heard and saved, and he will give thee a crown of life, and thou shalt live with him forever in Heaven?' I could not," added the converted native, "I could not forget his words. They constantly recurred to my mind; even in sleep, I dreamed of the blood which CHRIST shed for us. If, then," continued he, "you would have your words gain an entrance among the Heathen, preach to them CHRIST JESUS, his blood, his sufferings, and his death." Such was the judgment of this converted Heathen, and it may be illustrated and confirmed by the examination of almost any page in the history of idolatry.

Again. I was lately reading a very interesting work, viz: Polynesian Researches, or the History of Missions in the Pacific, and I was struck with the following passage, which, at the time of reading I marked down, for the purpose of using it in this discourse. It relates to the preaching of the missionaries in the island of Tahiti. "It was the custom of the missionaries, not only to instruct the natives in the school, preach to them in the chapel, and itinerate through the villages, but to assemble them for the purpose of reading from manuscript such portions of the Scripture as were deemed suitable to the circumstances. On one of these occasions, Mr. Nott was reading the first portion of the Gospel of St. John, to a number of the natives; when he had finished the sixteenth verse of the third chapter, a native who had listened with avidity to the words, interrupted him and said, 'what words are these you read; what words were those I heard? Let me hear those words again.' Mr. Nott again read the verse—GOD so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. When the native arose from his seat, and said, 'Is that true? Can that be true? GOD love the world, when the world not love him? GOD so love the world as to give his son to die, that man not die? Can that be true?' Mr. Nott again read the verse, told him that it was true, and that it was the message GOD

had sent to them, and that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. The overwhelming feelings of the native were too powerful for restraint or expression,—He burst into tears, and as these chased each other down his cheeks, he retired to meditate in private, on the amazing love of GOD which had that day reached his soul; and there was every reason to believe he was afterwards raised to share the peace and happiness resulting from the love of GOD, shed abroad in his heart."

Besides this, there is another most striking instance in the case of the deservedly distinguished Dr. Chalmers—I will give his own language. "I cannot," says he "but record the effect of an actual, and undesigned experiment which I prosecuted for upwards of twelve years. During that time, I am not sensible that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues and proprieties of social life, had the weight of a feather on the moral habits of my parishioners, and it was not till I got impressed by the utter alienation of the heart, in its desires and affections from GOD; it was not till reconciliation to him, became the distinct and prominent object of my ministerial exertions; it was not till I took the Scriptural way of laying the method of reconciliation before them; it was not till the free offer of forgiveness, through the blood of CHRIST, was urged upon their acceptance, and the HOLY SPIRIT given through the channel of CHRIST'S mediation to all who ask him, was set before them, as the unceasing object of their dependence and their prayers; it was not, in one word, till the contemplation of my people were turned to these great and essential elements in the business of a soul providing for its interest with GOD, and the concerns of eternity, that I ever heard of any of these subordinate reformations which I aforetime made the earnest and the zealous, but I am afraid, at the same time, the ultimate object of my earlier ministrations."

It is his solemn declaration, "that preaching CHRIST is the only effective way of preaching morality in all its branches." This is a subject of deep interest and value, and tells to perfect satisfaction from the experience of one of the greatest men now living; that as the preaching of CHRIST is the only way of preaching morality in all its branches, it is of course the only way of

making sinners what they ought to be; or in other words, converting them from the error of their ways, to serve the living GOD. And this is a main, and sufficiently impressive reason why we preach CHRIST crucified.

2. Another reason is, that this is the one great and distinguishing method adopted by the first and most successful preachers of the Gospel of the Savior.

Look at the apostles when they went forth to convert the world, and ascertain the subjects on which they insisted, in order to accomplish their object on the hearts and consciences of their hearers. The language of my text, in its impressive connection, will give you the information of their method. "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but WE preach CHRIST crucified; to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, CHRIST the power of GOD and the wisdom of GOD." Examine also the declaration of the same apostle in another chapter. "For I determine not to know any thing among you, save JESUS CHRIST and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the SPIRIT and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD." And now observe the result of this mode of proceeding. It is most beautifully and truly said by Cunningham—"During the life of CHRIST, though that life was adorned by every thing most lovely and attractive; though he spake as never man spake; though his ministry was surrounded by a blaze of miracles and mighty demonstrations of the power of GOD, few converts, comparatively, were made. But as soon as the apostles could plead the death of their master—could lead the sinner to the tomb of his Savior—could exhibit the Son of GOD, bleeding and mangled on the cross, a new impulse appears to have been given to religion, and fresh power to every sentence which they uttered. St. Peter no sooner stood up and proclaimed the Savior, whom his hearers, with wicked hands, had crucified and slain, then multitudes, as by power resistless, 'were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren what shall we do?'

And thus, by the power of the cross, were touched, were convinced, and converted, and three thousand added to the Church. And when his brother apostle went forth in the strength of the same principles, it is written, 'then mightily grew the word of GOD and prevailed.'

"It is, therefore, necessary, and indispensably so, to consider the triumphs of the Gospel as obtained by the very simplicity of this impressive doctrine.

"The once bigotted Jew, and the profligate Gentile;—the proud member of the only true Church then on earth, and the polluted Idolater;—the nations which slept in darkness, and practised and justified every abomination; the luxurious worshipper of Jupiter and the Pantheon; and the naked and savage Druid of the British isles;—all these, reclaimed as we now behold them, from ignorance, and guilt, and blood, are to be regarded as so many witnesses to the power of the doctrine of the Cross; that momentous truth,—that the SON of GOD 'gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice for sin.'"

3. Once more—It is the method CHRIST himself pointed out. There is one passage of Scripture, very seldom thought of, and very seldom quoted in this connection, but which, nevertheless, conveys to my mind a most wonderful emphasis of meaning: "And I," says the Lord JESUS CHRIST, "if I be LIFTED UP will draw all men unto me." It refers unquestionably, in its primary bearing, to the solemn fact of his crucifixion, when he was lifted up on the cross, like the serpent in the wilderness, "that whosoever believeth on Him may receive eternal life;" but it had a much more extensive reference. The *lifting* up of CHRIST is the *full and faithful preaching* of the doctrine of my text—JESUS CHRIST a sacrifice for sin;—"who made, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice."

Why is it, that among that class of nominal Christians who deny the divinity of CHRIST, and the saving efficacy of his atonement—why is it, that among them we hear of no revivals of religion, no anxious inquirers pressing with most painful and intense anxiety the question, "What shall we do to be saved?"—No zealous effort to convert the world to the truth of JESUS? Why do we hear of no such things among them? Because the

animating impulse of it all is wanting; JESUS CHRIST is not *lifted* up. He is rather sunk down to the level of frail humanity, and the attractions of his cross denied. Why is it, that even among Churches which are sound in principle, we do often find so much coldness, and lukewarmness, and indifference, and worldliness?—It is because while what is preached may be truth as far as it goes, CHRIST is not yet "lifted up" as he should be: moral suasion, or some mere technicallity of sectarian peculiarity, is substituted for the attractions of the cross. Taking the word of CHRIST for a guide, it were sufficient for us to come to the determination, that men are to be converted, they are to be drawn to him, only when he is "lifted up." And this is a grand and paramount reason why "*we* preach CHRIST crucified."

Brethren, it is peculiarly adapted to the solemnities of this day to present before you the *fact*, and on that fact the doctrine, of JESUS CHRIST and him crucified. Sinners, careless and unconcerned, it is the cross that I lift up before you this day. On that instrument of torture hung the Savior; who there for you poured out his soul, even unto death; and yet instead of feeling an interest, such as should be felt by those whose only possibility of salvation rests in the sacrifice there made, and the blood there poured out, you are indifferent—unconcerned—impenitent. There are no movements of gratitude upon your hearts—no language of gratitude upon your lips. There are no tears of sorrow in your eyes—and, in the whole of your life and conversation, not one living exhibition of the least concern. This day I charge, in the name of GOD, upon every unconverted man and woman, that you stand around the cross of CHRIST, the cold and heartless spectators of a scene of agony unparalleled; while it was for *you* that all this suffering was so calmly, so patiently endured. But let me not utter one syllable which may this day seem like harshness or reproach. No! not even may I reproach sinners with ingratitude; for from the lips of Him who was crucified there fell no language but that of prayer for his persecutors; there were no reproaches but the eloquent reproaches of agony and blood! Have the stripes in the judgment hall of Pilate no voice for sinners? Hath the crown of thorns no argument? Is there no pleading in the weary and blood-stained pathway up the hill of Calvary? Is there no

tongue in the nails which pierced his hands and his feet, or the spear which entered into his side? Is there no eloquence in the silent suffering of the cross—its shame, its agony, its blood? What will not the heart withstand which can withstand the sufferings on Calvary's mount endured?

> "For me those pangs his soul assail,
> For me this death is borne;
> My sins gave sharpness to the nail,
> And pointed every thorn."

To draw you to this Savior; to touch your hearts; to save your souls; O sinners! I this day tell you, "we preach CHRIST crucified."

NOTE.—Having been unexpectedly asked by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Meade to preach in Alexandria at the time when several members of the seminary were to be ordained, the author, having no sermon with him more appropriate than the present, added the following remarks:

In drawing this discourse to a close, I would address myself to those who are this day to be invested with the sacred dignities of the ministerial office. My dear friends, what can I say to you, or what ought I to say to you, which is not directly connected with my text? I might speak something as to your personal demeanor, for in the charge of an apostle we find it written, "take heed," not only to "thy doctrine," but "take heed unto *thyself*." Not only the personal piety, but the outward demeanor of a minister of the Gospel are matters of extreme importance. By the mercies of GOD I beseech you, as you are young, to be particularly circumspect as to your intercourse with the world. I do not ask you to be austere, but I wish you to be grave and dignified; always maintain such a conduct as may indicate self respect, and never give room either for yourselves or for your religion to be treated with levity. I leave you to read what Paul said to Timothy and Titus, for I have no time to enter into the minutiæ of these matters. My subject relates to the *preaching* of the Gospel. Let that be "JESUS CHRIST and him crucified,"—nothing else. I do most earnestly beseech you to examine every sermon you now

have, and every one that you may hereafter write, for the express purpose of acertaining whether they be full of JESUS CHRIST. If they are not—*burn* them; do not inflict on any people to whom you may minister, the curse of a *Christless sermon*. I have heard discourses in which even the name of JESUS did not occur, and though I am aware that He may be named in a discourse, and that frequently, where there is no real spirituality, yet it is even better so than that there should be a discourse without both. Even the *name* of the "precious" Savior and his cross carry some energy along. It is "as ointment poured forth." But what I mean is, let CHRIST be the sum and substance. This implies, that every discourse recognises the totality of man's depravity, his need of a Savior, his perishing condition without CHRIST. It implies, that every discourse directs sinners to JESUS CHRIST, as "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" and to the HOLY SPIRIT as He who "takes of the things of CHRIST and shows them unto us." It implies that every discourse speaks of repentance, and faith, and conversion, and sanctification. What! bring all these things into every discourse? Yes! bring every one of them into *every discourse*. Let not one ingredient be wanting. There can be no good sermon in which every one of them will not naturally appear, or from which the implication is not too obvious to be mistaken. You may preach fine discourses,—elegant discourses,—discourses which may make the people look at you with amazement, and all without CHRIST; and yet every one of these discourses will be labor lost, and more than lost. Let me assure you, my friends, that of all the temptations which ever besets the path of a young minister, and many an old one too, there is none so strong as the temptation of preaching a discourse which may show HIMSELF. Nothing will check this disposition to raise one's self but that true humility of heart which determines, by the grace of GOD, to make CHRIST prominent. Lift him up, and hide yourselves behind him! My dear young friends, preach "CHRIST crucified," and your message to sinners will be blessed. There is no attraction like that of the cross. Genius, talent, rare intellectual attainment, may excite to yourselves admiration, but the cross of CHRIST *draws sinners*. Let that cross be your personal attraction, and all will be safe and well. GOD be with you. Amen.

THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL PULPIT.

TWO SERMONS BY THE REV. JOHN GRIGG.

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THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER:

A Sermon

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St. Luke, xviii. 13.—"God! *be merciful to me, a sinner!*"

There never rose to Heaven more acceptable incense than this short, this comprehensive, this heart-touching prayer. It is an epitome of devotion adapted to the child as to the hoary head, to the ignorant as the sage, to the wavering sceptic as well as the matured in grace. It is the purest model proposed for the imitation of the Church, and which, used in the spirit that breathed it, will render Jehovah propitious to the suppliant. Behold the person from whose lips it emanates! A wretched publican, an extortionate tax-gatherer, enters the courts of the temple to offer up his devotions. Pale, solitary, and dejected; he is overwhelmed, amidst thousands, by the weight of his iniquity. Every faculty of his body proclaims the depth of his emotions. His faultering foot, palsied by fear, stands *afar off* from the altar, trembling in shame at the abuse of its mercy. His tear-swollen eye, downcast with suspense, fears, like Belshazzar, to read the horrors of its sentence. His hand, too worthless to be clasped, beats in indignation his agitated breast, while his mouth, his tongue, his heart cry aloud in concert, the language of the bitterest remorse; God! God! *be merciful to me, a sinner!* Such was the prayer which Christ assures us *justified* the contrite publican, and which he thus holds out as a model to instruct us in the matter of our devotions.

Would you be informed, brethren, of the cause that rendered this prayer so effectual, and which obtained from the Redeemer

so rich and transporting a sentence! Are you desirous of being taught the nature of the publican's entreaty, and the mode whereby you may be enabled to become similarly successful! Is it your heart's desire to enjoy that mercy which perishing sinners require, and depart like him from this temple *justified rather than the pharisee!* Consider, then, the particulars which this memorable prayer unfolds.

I. His REPENTANCE, implied in the confession "ME A SINNER."

II. His FAITH in the atonement denoted by the petition, "BE MERCIFUL."

III. His PIOUS DEVOTION founded on both these, "GOD! BE MERCIFUL TO ME, A SINNER."

I. Consider his REPENTANCE implied in the confession "ME A SINNER."

The term "sinner," among the Jews, conveyed an epithet of the darkest reproach, and hence nothing was thought more infamous in CHRIST, than his frequent communication with *publicans and sinners.* In the use of a term so degrading, the publican owns himself, though deemed otherwise by society, the most ignoble wretch in existence, and as "the chief of sinners," with St. Paul, obnoxious to the penalty of a violated law. He enters not like thoughtless thousands of the present day, the temple of their Maker, to offer the accustomed token of civility, in the cold, heartless formality of an unfelt confession. He feels that words, and professions, and show, are too poor to give vent to the torrent of his soul, and though encompassed by multitudes, apparently in quest of the same object, he dares only tremble at his own guilt, and suspect the motives that dictated his confession. As a sinner, he was conscious of inheriting original guilt, felt that he had broken the precepts of the divine law, and, though the last remedy of salvation, had neglected the covenant of grace and the qualifications to interest him in the atonement.

1. The publican was then "a sinner" from original corruption. Taught by the prophet that *we are all as an unclean thing,*

that *the* human *heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;* he is heard subscribing to the doctrine enforced by the apostle, *as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* From a child, he was conscious of a mind inimical to divine knowledge, and a will radically averse to the commandments of his Maker! Why else in his youth did he manifest such repugnance to restraint, and so inordinate a fondness for the vanities of the world? Why else in riper years became he such a slave to the world, and such an enemy and stranger to the duties his GOD enjoined? Arose it not from that fall of which, though personally guiltless, of its effects he became the sharer? Inheriting these; he knew that without a change, his corrupt soul must be banished from heaven, and sentenced to the curse of which sin is the fountain. Guilty and unrenewed—What could recommend him to the mercy of GOD, since his conduct had been so criminal, and his passions so depraved? How could he hope that a cumberer like himself should be suffered to poison society? How could he rest in peace when he heard the thunder of Sinai denouncing his corruption, and beheld the lightning of GOD's justice flashing to consume him? Behold he approaches THE ALMIGHTY with pious trepidation! *Behold I am vile! what shall I answer thee! I will lay my hand upon my mouth.* Estranged from thy service, Holy LORD, my soul with all its faculties is too worthless for thy acceptance. Alas! my understanding is darkened, my will is opposed, my affections have proved traitors to thy law. Did not thy grace counterbalance thy justice, I should not thus long have been spared, to trample upon thy compassion. But spare, righteous Father, a wretch, who, redeemed by the Messiah, implores thy mercy as the vilest of sinners; and in room of that corruption which debases his heart, O, implant thy own righteousness, infuse thy own Spirit, that he may be sanctified and saved!

2. Not only did original guilt render him a sinner, it was more especially his violation of the Divine precepts that extorted his confession. When he remembered that a single breach of the moral law merited endless death, and that he had ten thousand

times infringed the most of its injunctions, he perceived no possible hope of escaping its penalty. Contrary to light, conviction, and the commands of GOD, he had plunged into pleasures destructive to his own peace, and panted after objects which threatened the ruin of his soul. Often he had falsified his word, been guilty of injustice, disregarded the Scriptures, abused the Sabbath and ordinances of heaven, and profaned through passion the holy name of GOD. How had his levity led numbers astray from the paths of rectitude, and hardened the convictions of his own soul against the piercing upbraidings of conscience! What have been the omissions that have crimsoned his past life! How often through shame has he shrunk from censuring the guilty, and suffered the selfishness of his heart to freeze up the fountain of charity! The cry of the unrelieved widow or the orphan rings dolefully in his ears, and he yet hears the groanings of those perishing sinners whose souls he might have been the means of rescuing from death. How frequently had he refused to extend the hand of forgiveness, and to gratify his malice, he had defamed the reputation of an envied neighbor! Why has he neglected the worship of GOD in his closet, his family and the Church, and dared to live for every other object but piety, heaven, and JEHOVAH!

Regarding the spirituality of the moral law, the publican knew that the thoughts and purposes of his heart were frequently criminal; and though in the estimation of the world, his conduct might appear laudable, yet its governing motive too often, alas! was the indulgence of his pride and passions. How recalls he those nameless vices committed under the veil of secrecy, and night, which he would blush at, if exposed to the observation of the world! How dwells he on those silent criminal reveries of the mind known only to his GOD and his own immortal soul! Though his hands are unstained by blood, yet the malice of his heart has embrued them in as awful a crime. Though unpractised in sensuality, yet his lawless wishes and thoughts enstamp him a sensualist in the sight of his Maker. Though he has never embezzled his neighbor's goods, yet his covetous desires have accused him of the crime. Though free from the excesses of the table, yet his unrestrained passions and will have reigned the monarchs of his reason.

3. To add to his despair, he had neglected the sole remedies of salvation, and by impenitence and disregard of a mediator's sacrifice, he had become an enemy and outcast to the covenant of mercy. He had neglected hitherto to approach the Divine presence, *with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning—to rend his heart and not his garments, and turn unto the* LORD *his* GOD! He had refrained from applying to the mercy seat with a *lowly and contrite spirit*, as such only was the habitation of his spotless Creator, and as such was the sacrifice so earnestly demanded by heaven! He had refused to look for acceptance alone through *the seed of the woman*—the promised *Shiloh*, whom all the bleeding victims prefigured, and his only hope of salvation rested in uncovenanted dependence on the ceremonial observances of the law. Cruel to reflect, he had abused his mercies, forgotten his duties, slighted the awakenings of the HOLY SPIRIT, rejected his Maker's ordinances, and neglected those sacrifices which were typical of his Cross.

O GOD! How unspeakably enormous the catalogue of his rebellions! How vainly has he strived to elude the lightning of thine all-seeing eye! How rashly contended with thine arm, whose stroke is annihilation! How madly has he swelled the list of his crimes to draw down upon his head the thunders of thy vengeance!

The wretched publican looks to the earth in tears. He sees no star to guide him through the darkness, but the star of Calvary; no fountain to wash away his guilt, but the fountain of a Savior's blood. His words were few, but his heart spoke infinitely more. That faltering step—that fearful distance—that down-cast eye—that indignant hand, attested louder than volumes, the anguish of his emotions. He who demands not words to express the feelings of the soul, heard the ingenuous confession, beheld the deep-toned sorrow, witnessed the love and devotedness of spirit which that inimitable prayer disclosed. Sending his angel to impart the message of forgiveness, He inspires the outcast mourner with the dawning joys of hope. The publican discerns the cross of Calvary through the sacrifices on the altar, and proclaims his unwavering faith in the Savior to whom they pointed.

II. Consider then his FAITH in the atonement, denoted by the petition, "BE MERCIFUL."

The original word "be merciful," is the same that signifies "the mercy seat," and denotes the atonement made by the blood, of which sacrifices were the symbols and types. Every morning and evening a lamb was sacrificed in the temple, and the altar of incense at the same time sending up its smoke, rendered, from their reference to CHRIST, the prayers of the worshippers acceptable. It was alluding to this very sacrifice and incense, that the publican found his hope of pardoning mercy. Be propitious to me a sinner, (he exclaims) O my GOD, by virtue of these offerings which typify JESUS CHRIST. For thy name's sake, O LORD be merciful to my sins, for the sake of that mercy seat which shadows forth the Messiah!

The vague hope of dependence on the mere mercy of GOD sustained not the heart of the penitent criminal. He had heard the thunders of Sinai denouncing his sentence, and he knew that without a ransom, mercy could not be granted. As the compassion of GOD must tally with his justice, he saw they combined alone in him in whom *mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other.* How could he hope for mercy—he who had broken the precepts of the divine law, and quenched the convictions which that mercy addressed to him! How could he expect mercy—he who had spurned the compassion of JEHOVAH, and proclaimed by his rebellion that he neither valued nor desired it! Did he found his hope of acceptance on the blood of the sacrificed victims? He remembered that even these were *an abomination* unless accompanied by the oblation of *a broken and contrite heart.* He derives no comfort from the hope that even his reformation will appease the justice of GOD. Though discharging the whole law, he could never atone for the sins of his past life, and cancel the punishment they justly demanded. Subsequent obedience can never remit the previous crimes of the criminal, and until the claims of justice be rigorously satisfied, his reformation is unentitled to the acceptance of his judge. How then could the reformation of the publican expiate the sins he had committed! Would GOD accept of virtues like his, defiled

by such corruptions, and deriving their acts too often from motives so impure! Would even the merits of the holiest assuage the Divine justice, when they fall so far short of the heavenly model, and are counterbalanced by such infirmities that poison their noblest offerings!

No; Brethren! Though multitudes manifest their reliance on such supports, the reviving publican regards them all with scorn. Beholding nothing in himself meriting the Divine favor, he looks alone to the cross on Calvary, typified before him by the bleeding lamb. Here it is that his trembling spirit bows as the only remedy to escape perdition. Here the affections of his soul concentrate, and here the cry of mercy is so fervently directed. There stands the wretched mourner as if abandoned of every hope, and imploring the divine clemency through the merits of the Cross. GOD! he exclaims, *be merciful to me, a sinner!* It was the same cry heard from the patriarch Abel, when *offering the firstlings of his flock* as an expiation to GOD. It was the same prayer heard from the lips of all the patriarchs, reechoed from prophets and princes around the Holy of Holies; and from CHRIST'S day to the present, has resounded from the lips of every penitent publican. GOD! *be merciful to me, a sinner. The blood of bullocks and of goats*, with all the offerings of the old law, depicted the display of that sacrifice which swells now the prayer of the Christian Church. By the propitiation of these, the souls of millions have been freed from their spiritual chains, and the promises of mercy have enlivened their disconsolate hearts. It was this faith that hushed into a calm the distresses of the publican, that bade him approach with boldness the altar he avoided, that wiped the rolling tear from his cheek, and lighted up his eye and his heart with a joy they never knew before. Happy publican! May every soul like thee enjoy from his Lord the same enviable sentence! Spirit of JEHOVAH! inspire every heart and lip with the same celestial emotions! Blessed principle of Gospel faith! conduct us ever with the publican to the altar of divine mercy, and till the last fluttering pulse of life, assure us that we are *justified* by the Savior, and prepared to hold communion with him in his temple of glory!

III. Consider, also, the publican's DEVOTION; "GOD, BE MERCIFUL TO ME, A SINNER!"

Alarmed at his danger, the publican applies alone to JEHOVAH in the heart-melting petition—"O, GOD." Though the world often yielded him a transient relief, he remembered it was perishing, and incapable of imparting any solid ground of hope. Too long he had sought it in the cares of business, the joys of sense, and the dreams of scepticism. But now despairing of them all, he repairs alone to his GOD, and beseeches HIM in mercy to soothe his disconsolate heart. He felt that the world resembled the dim, cold moonlight of winter, and that the presence of GOD, like the sun, could alone enlighten and warm him. With the prince of Israel, the language of his heart declares—*Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee!* and with the inflexible Jacob he is heard proclaiming —*I will not let thee go until thou bless me.* Approaching in abject sorrow the presence of the King of King's; the burden of his prayer is the bestowal of MERCY. What more suitable language could a ruined sinner adopt! What stronger plea suggest to palliate his guilt! How else implore salvation! In what other mode draw near the insulted majesty of Heaven! *O* "GOD," he exclaims, *Be* thou *merciful!* Having nothing to offer in my own extenuation, I only dare implore thy pardoning compassion, and rest my every hope on the riches of thy grace. *O* GOD, *the* FATHER *of Heaven*! *O* GOD, *the* SON! *O* GOD, *the* HOLY GHOST! *Thou, Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, three persons, and one* GOD, *have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner! Have mercy upon* ME! Though I pray for the world, it is my first, most fervent of prayers that thou wouldst first crown *me* a subject of thy new creating grace. *Bless me, even me, also, O my Father*, and while so many thousands are being gathered in thy fold, let *me* not perish, the soul of thy own creation, the spirit which thou hast redeemed by the blood of thy only Son!

1. This subject addresses those who depend on their own *morality*, and feel not themselves *sinners* with the publican before them. If we are not *sinners, miserable sinners*, brethren, then JESUS CHRIST was never sent to *reclaim us*, for it was *only* such, remember, who were the subjects of his ministry. If we are

not *sinners, miserable sinners*, then the death and righteousness of CHRIST can be of no avail to save us, for it was to *ransom sinners from the curse* that *he was obedient* to the demands of the law. If we are not *sinners*, perishing sinners, brethren, then the testimony of Heaven, which declares *all have sinned*, is false, and even the Psalmist himself was deceived, when he proclaimed, *there is none good; no, not one.* If we are not *sinners, perishing sinners*, then we are called in vain to *repent of our transgressions*, and to us the exhortation of St. Paul is totally misapplied—*Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.* Rejoice, happy souls, independent of the precepts of the Gospel, and purchase your salvation by a *morality* unsanctified by the SPIRIT or the blessing of JESUS CHRIST. Depart to his bar if you can, cheered by the dim taper of your worthless performances, and demand everlasting life, as the purchase of your faithless, impenitent lives!—But are we indeed conscious of having sinned but once, and that once in thought, word, or deed, against the righteous laws of GOD? What then is our hope! What our ground of escaping the impending penalty! If the *single* offence of Adam incurred everlasting death, will ours, committed in the blaze of Gospel day avoid the sentence of despair! But what must be the doom of those who have repeatedly sinned against superior light, and who, added to their neglect of duty, have polluted so often the powers and affections of their souls! Can we exclaim with our hands upon our hearts, that we are not *sinners, miserable sinners*, in the sight of GOD, and that if we expire this very hour, we perish not forever the victims of his justice! Of what avail then to us will be the glitter of our *morals*, our estimation in society, our criminal self-deluding flattery! Though contributing much to the welfare of society, the enjoyment of our firesides, or the indulgence of our vanity; we may have done nothing, alas! for the glory of GOD, the interests of his Church, or the salvation of our imperishable souls. We may find that Heathen philosophers were as virtuous, and perhaps more virtuous than us; and with all the light that illumined our sky, we may deplore the awful darkness that blinded us to a knowledge of ourselves. As we dread, then, the consequence of unrepented guilt, let the

penitence of the publican be our immediate model! Here in the silence of these courts, let our souls stay behind from the glory of the Shechinah! With hands clasped in devotion,—with downcast eyes, and bleeding hearts, let our cry pierce the heavens in fervent ejaculation, GOD! GOD! *Be merciful to us sinners!*

2. Be instructed, I intreat you, by the fervency of the publican's faith. Approaching these altars every Lord's day to offer up our devotions, we perceive not the typical sacrifices that sanctified the Jewish Temple, but we behold the altar of salvation which reveals the bleeding Lamb of GOD, and the incense of his atonement rising to Heaven in our behalf. What then are our hopes, when responding with the Church, *there is no health in us*, we implore heaven for *mercy* as *miserable offenders*? On what do we found our expectations of pardon, when invoking the persons of the Trinity, we confess ourselves with the publican, to be perishing—*miserable sinners*! Does the prayer of faith accompany the sacrifice, or are these words uttered regardless of the sentiment, or the remedy they inculcate? Manifest then your faith in the propitiation of JESUS CHRIST! Advancing as outcast rebels to the foot of the cross, let our tears flow at every step, and our confidence wax the stronger as we ponder upon the victim! There is no other dependence but the righteousness of this Savior —no other cleansing fountain, but the fountain of His blood. If our cry for mercy be fervent and sincere, we will evidence our sincerity by feasting upon the sacrifice! Here our faith will be established in partaking of these symbols, and thus our humble cry for mercy, sanctified by a *holy life*, shall be acceptable through the passion of the crucified MESSIAH.

3. Let then the publican's prayer be breathed from every tongue and bosom. Would that every eye that meets mine were cast to the earth in tears! that the sigh of contrition was melting every heart, and subduing the rebellion of every hardened soul! But what is the reason that though this prayer be so frequently repeated, it finds us publicans in form, but pharisees in heart? Is it not owing to our neglect of THE ALMIGHTY, to our carnal attachments and our supreme reliance on the world? Instead of seeking the ordinances of grace, do we not rather fly to the diversions of gaiety—the bustle of society, and the distractions of our worldly concerns?

Approach rather, I intreat you, with the publican, the mercy seat of GOD! Here he is present to hear your prayers, relieve your wants, console your sorrows, and strengthen your infirmities. Here forget that you breathe for any other object but GOD, for any other joy but the bliss of your salvation. While the taper of life yet glimmers in its socket, cry aloud for MERCY, as the vilest of transgressors. Mercy, believe me, is the dearest of all blessings. What would the condemned criminal bestow, could the sweet tones of mercy enliven his hopeless dungeon? The sinner, alas! I realize in his case. I look beyond his postponements, his neglects, his multiplied rebellions, to that closing hour that shall number him with the departed! I follow his trembling spirit, awakening from his last sleep, and summoned, dreadful thought! to the left hand of CHRIST'S bar! Then how loud will the cry of mercy be heard from his agonized breast! How would he give worlds to approach this day, with the publican, this altar of mercy, and manifest his penitence in the lowliest of frames!

Spared then as we are, fellow mortals, let us raise before GOD, the humble cry, and prepare for that day, when mercy shall outweigh worlds. Before we leave these courts, decide, piously decide, whether ours has been the prayer of the unrenewed pharisee, or whether we shall depart to our homes, *justified* with the spirit of the publican. Let the young resolve to mortify their hearts with the publican, and live alone for that mercy which can only sweeten their enjoyments! Let the worldling determine to lay aside his coldness and worldly lusts, and take refuge in due season beneath the shadow of the cross! Resolve, faltering mourner, to hasten to the altar of thy Savior, and receive that blessing which the publican has realized! Persevere in thy prayers, thou devoted servant of JESUS CHRIST! Thy crown is glittering through the fountain of thy tears. While the worldling approaches unconcernedly this consecrated altar—stand thou in trembling sorrow at a distance from thy GOD! While thy grief declares the purity of thy penitence, and thy heart is breaking forth in the ejaculation of the publican—JEHOVAH is even now listening to thy devotion, and will have mercy upon thee a sinner, by virtue of the sacrifice here displayed. GOD! BE MERCIFUL TO THEE, A SINNER! Amen, and Amen!

THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER.

What was the cry which louder rang
Through Judah's halls of yore,
Than all the hymns by thousands sang,
Than all the prayers they bore?
It was a sinner's heart-felt cry—
A publican's deep, melting sigh—
Have mercy—mercy LORD *on me!*
A rebel, wandering soul from Thee!

What was the prayer which angels caught,
And laid before the throne,
Which sheath'd the sword which justice wrought,
And rich forgiveness won?
It was a lowly sinner's prayer,
O'erwhelmed by guilt, remorse and care—
Have mercy—mercy LORD *on me!*
Tormented by guilt's agony!

What was the tear which wip'd away
The stain and guilt of sin,—
Which lighted up by mercy's ray
Reflected peace within?
It was the publican's big tear
Which wet his cheek with shame and fear—
Have mercy—mercy LORD *on me!*
A sinner pierced with misery!

What was the faith which sun-light shone
Amid earth's shaded toys,
Which, when all other hopes had flown,
Ensur'd celestial joys?
It was the penitent's calm trust
In him *the righteous and the just;*
Have mercy—mercy LORD *on me!*
A ransomed sinner rais'd to thee!

Such be the cry and prayer of all!
Such be our faith and tears!
Such be our hope, whate'er befal,
Till the light of heav'n appears!
What though our bodies melt to dust,
Like victim lambs consumed—we trust
Our souls redeemed from guilt shall rise
Upon their incense to the skies. J. G.

THE RIGHTEOUS FLOURISHING:

A Sermon

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Psalm xcii. 12.—"*The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree.*"

WERE a certain king to pardon his rebel subjects on condition that they would lay aside their arms and yield to his authority; were he further pleased to accept their sincere repentance in lieu of perfect obedience, and regard them in the light of those who had never revolted from his service, it is plain that his acceptance of their duty was a mere act of undeserved mercy, which merely considered as obedience what was only a feeble endeavor to attain it.

Previous to original sin, righteousness was the perfect conformity of man to the revealed will of JEHOVAH, *for in the image of* GOD *created he him.* But now, being all of us rebels against him, and morally unable to keep the Divine precepts, he has extended to us all the promise of reconciliation provided that we submissively return to our allegiance, and strive by the aid of his grace to conform to the requirements of his Gospel. As *the faith of Abraham was counted unto him for righteousness*, although his character was polluted by much infirmity and error, so the Gospel proclamation declares that faith in the atonement of JESUS CHRIST, accompanied by sincere though imperfect obedience, justifies all his followers, and entitles them to the appellation of holy and righteous persons. *Therefore*, declares St. Paul, *being justified by faith, we have peace with* GOD, *through our* LORD JESUS CHRIST. Now this reckoning of JEHOVAH must be just, for, since the righteousness of man is the conformity of his will and passions to the particular law which he is under, so if the judge who has competent authority sees fit to adapt his laws to the imperfection of his creatures, and decide that they have conformed to their observance, though in many respects they have fallen

short of them, they may be truly regarded *righteous*, who submit to that standard. They are considered so, in accommodation to their fallen and depraved powers which are morally incapable of obeying a perfect law, and hence they who rely *supremely* on the *sacrifice of the Savior*, and love and serve him with all their hearts *are accounted righteous before* GOD by virtue of the Mediator, *and not their own works or deservings.** Thus, though *there is none righteous, no, not one*, as it respects their entire conformity to the laws of heaven, yet as *all* may be considered so who submit to the Gospel plan of salvation, we perceive that it is only in accommodation to human weakness, and that it is only owing to the free, unmerited grace of JEHOVAH.

The *righteous*, then, are not those who never sin, who never deviate by infirmity from *the pure and perfect way*, for such alas, exist not in the world. But they are those only who ingenuously perform all their duties to GOD, themselves, and their fellow creatures, and with contrite hearts ascribe their sole merit to him who *has loved them and washed them in his own blood.* Thus their virtue consists in integrity of heart and life, receiving from the Savior, as the earth from the sun, all their light, warmth and fertility.

Now nothing more fitly and beautifully characterizes *the righteous* than *the palm tree*, of which the Psalmist speaks in the text, both as it regards their qualities and the blessings which attend them. THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL FLOURISH LIKE THE PALM TREE.

In what respects, then, do the pious resemble this tree, and how may it be said that they *shall flourish like the palm tree?* There are three singular properties of this tree in which they may be compared to the righteous.

I. In their usefulness.
II. In their resistance to external calamity, and
III. In their duration.

I. *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree* in their *usefulness.*

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* See XI. Article of the Church.

The works of God not only manifest his power, wisdom, and benevolence, but illustrate the laws and doctrines of Divine revelation. That certain qualities of animal and vegetable nature should typify and explain the operations of mind and providence; that the air we breathe—the light and comforts we enjoy, should be significant of correspondent gifts to the soul, would be folly in the extreme, unless they were modes of teaching which our limited faculties require. As the mirror reflects and softens down the dazzling rays of the sun, so the works of creation reflect the glory of Divine truth and enable the soul to comprehend their wisdom.

Thus *the palm tree* illustrates *the usefulness of the righteous.* While other trees are distinguished by their devious trunks, this tree shoots perpendicularly upward to a considerable height, and *thus* resembles the *pious* mind, whose inclinations and pursuits ever tend toward *heaven.* Even Mahomet could say of the generous man; "he stands erect before his Lord: in every action he follows the impulse received from above, and his whole life is devoted to the welfare of his fellow creatures." Rearing its stem, and diffusing its refreshing shade in dreary solitudes, where nothing else can be found to shelter the exhausted traveller, how beautifully does this tree exemplify the character of the Christian in the midst of a *desert* world, who, when nothing else can satisfy or refresh the weary spirit, becomes alone a refuge of solace and support! Bearing its branches only on the top, the palm tree diffuses thence a most grateful shade upon all who are below; and is it not in a similar manner that they who are enlightened and *warmed* by the spirit of Christian faith and charity, become a *shade* to the friendless, the destitute, and the afflicted? Their elevated principles, and heaven-born affections, like the palm tree's shade from the top, refresh many a *weary* spirit, and sustain *many* a desponding heart. They who refuse to become a shade to others, to exercise a liberal and philanthropic spirit wherever it is needed, forget that they live for others as well as for themselves. They forget that benevolence "blesses him that gives and him that takes," that in proportion as we gratify others, we rejoice ourselves, and that none are more miserable than those who live only to themselves. As the palm tree is repaid for the shade it yields in the cultivation

it receives from the grateful hand it blesses; so they who benefit the needy, often live under the shade of the very bounty they impart, or they enjoy an unspeakable delight in rendering the mourner happy, or they become the objects of those earnest prayers which their liberality has awakened in the hearts of others.

The palm tree is noted for the *abundance* of its fruit. The powerful action of the sap is developed not only in thick umbrageous foliage, but in multitudes of flowers and dates. "The dates hung from these trees," says a learned traveller,* "in such large and tempting clusters, that we climbed to the tops of some of them, and carried away with us large branches with their fruit. Wherever," says he, "the date tree is found in these dreary deserts, it not only presents a supply of salutary food for men and camels, but nature has so wonderfully contrived the plant, that its first offering is accessible to man alone; and the mere circumstance," he observes, "of its presence in all seasons of the year is a never-failing indication of fresh water near its roots. A considerable part of the inhabitants of Egypt, of Arabia, and of Persia," he continues, "subsist almost entirely upon its fruit. They boast also of its medicinal virtues. Their camels feed upon the date stones. From the leaves and branches are made an astonishing variety of domestic furniture and utensils; from the fibres of the boughs are manufactured thread, ropes, and rigging; from the sap is prepared a spirituous liquor; the body of the tree furnishes fuel; and from one variety of the tree meal has been extracted, and has been used for food." Are not thus the righteous pictured forth by this tree? They who "have put on CHRIST" *abound in every good thought, word, and work*, and remembering that they are *the branches of the living vine*, they *yield much fruit of righteousness to the glory and praise of* GOD. Are they not eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and feet to the lame? Who are readier than *they* to listen to the tale of distress, and, if unable to furnish temporal aid, to impart what is better, the treasures of feeling hearts? Is the Church of CHRIST in want of their assistance?

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* Dr. Clarke.

Who are more unwearied in rendering *its gates salvation, and its walls praise?* As neighbors and citizens—Who are more zealous in alleviating the burdens of one another, and promoting the honor and prosperity of their native land? As Parents and Christians, Who are more assiduous in rejoicing the hearts of their families and friends, and shedding around them, as the sun, light, life, and enjoyment? While the piety of some requires to be trumpeted forth by acts of ostentatious display, the *righteous* are always known, like the secret wells of the desert, by the living verdure about them; for wherever they go, blessings attend their steps. Like the palm, whose "presence is a never-failing indication of fresh water near its roots," their presence is heralded by the happiness of those they have benefited, by the virtuous habits which have sprung up from the good seed they have sown, and by the shouts of industry and plenty which their influence and example have diffused. Go where they will, either in civilized or heathen lands—whether among the illiterate Esquimaux or the polished nations of Europe—and they receive the commendation of all who are around them. They carry with them an atmosphere of light, of cheerfulness, and holiness, which diffuse a grateful fragrance through the circles of society; and though they are not advanced to the highest stations of the empire, yet they receive as much, if not more, real honor from mankind; *For they that honor me*, saith GOD, *I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.* Blessed and holy spirits! Go on prospering and to prosper. The tongues of thousands bless you. The hearts of those ye have gladdened leap at your approach. In the Almighty Parent let your root be established, and *from him shall your fruit be found.* In him *your branches shall spread, your beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and your smell as Lebanon.*

II. *The righteous*, also, *shall flourish like the palm tree*, in their *resistance to external calamity.*

Neither weight nor violence can make this tree grow downwards or crooked; but the more it is oppressed, the more it flourishes, the higher it towers, and the stronger and broader it becomes at

the top.* From this singular quality it became the emblem of constancy, patience, and victory by the eastern nations; and hence CHRIST was honored at Jerusalem by the waving of the palm branches; and the redeemed in heaven are described as carrying *palms in their hands*, in token of the triumphs they had achieved. How like indeed to thee, thou Prince of righteousness and life, was the palm that came forth to honor thee! "Eminent and upright, thou art ever verdant and ever fragrant; under the greatest pressure and weight of sufferings, still ascending towards heaven; affording both fruit and protection; incorruptible, immortal, and never fading away!"† Is it not thus with thy servants, thou blessed Prince of Peace; for are they not *members of thy body, thy flesh and of thy bones?* No situation so thoroughly proves the Christian as the afflictions of mortality. The feeblest infant may endure the sunshine, but it requires the man to face the storm. To bravely resist the attacks of calumny and disappointment, and evidence to the world that our piety is invincible and calm; to regard the desertions of fortune and the frowns of pain with composure, remembering that they are the debts and penalties of poor human nature; to walk away from the new-made grave with our hearts wrapped only in GOD, and resolutions more enkindled to benefit the surviving,—these are the characteristics of great and noble minds; but, like diamonds, they have been found in the lowliest situations. Like the waves in the storm, the righteous have been tossed to and fro by the trials of life, but like them they are uninjured; for soon the tempest of suffering subsides, and the light of heaven sleeps upon their

* See Cruden in loco, and H. J. Rose's edition of Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon. "The permanency and perpetual flourishing of the palm leaves, and their form resembling the solar rays, make this tree a very proper emblem of the natural, and thence of the divine light. Hence in the holy place or sanctuary of the temple, (the emblem of CHRIST'S body,) palm trees were engraved on the walls and doors, between the coupled cherubs. See I Kings, vi. 29, &c. The reason given by Plutarch and Aulus Gellius, why they were used as emblems of victory by idolaters, is the nature of the wood, which so powerfully resists incumbent pressure; but doubtless believers, by bearing palm branches after a victory, or in triumph, meant to acknowledge the divine Author of their support and success, and to carry on their thoughts to *the divine Light, the great Conqueror of sin and death.* (See 1 Mac. xiii. 51, xviii. 17.)

† Dr. Horne.

bosom. But why should affliction enervate or unman us? Have we forgotten that the same GOD who gave the *day* gave also the *night*—the storm as well as the calm? They serve the same purpose in the moral as in the natural world. They teach us by contrasts the value of the Divine gifts, and tend to purify the heart from its carnal corruptions. Oh, how many have been indebted to affliction's school! It is *thus* that they have learned themselves and the nature of the world, the mode of enjoying as well as of suffering; and, with the apostle, they have known *both to be full and to be hungry, to abound and to suffer need.*

Let it not be said, that this fortitude is constitutional. Humanity always rebels against suffering; and resignation is acquired by remembering our relation to GOD and the world, and the moral benefits resulting from momentary pain. The merchant, the scholar, the man of pleasure, the ambitious zealot, knows and practises it; for they perceive that in acquiring treasures much is to be endured. In preparing for heaven, the richest of all prizes, the Christian schools his mind to trials, as the pupil to his studies, knowing that they are the means of purifying his nature, and exalting his affections more ardently to GOD. His constitutional passion bows to the influence of his faith. He invokes the aid of the Spirit of THE ALMIGHTY, by whom his virtues and graces are quickened, his repentance and devotion, enlivened and perfected; and enlarging at the top like the holy palm, he is filled with the light and consolations of the Gospel, and *goes on his way rejoicing, looking unto* JESUS, *the Author and Finisher of his faith.*

III. *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree in their duration.*

Ever verdant, and beautiful, this tree flourishes as well in a desert as on the banks of a river—in a temperate valley, as on a stormy mountain in the limits of perpetual snow. In winter as well as summer, they blossom throughout the year; and they last to a vigorous old age, regardless of the storms and hurricanes that rage around them. A modern traveller* informs us that "the

* Dr. Shaw.

palm tree arrives to its greatest vigor about thirty years after transplantation, and continues so seventy years afterwards;* after this period it begins to decline, and usually falls about the latter end of the second century."

In length of days, also, shall the righteous flourish as this tree. Regarded as a temporal promise, the blessing of a long life may, undoubtedly, be viewed as the heritage of the pious. Solitary cases affect not a general principle, for although many followers of CHRIST are called away in the morning and noon of life, yet regular and virtuous habits, springing from love towards GOD, tend to protract the existence to a venerable age. On the contrary, vicious indulgences, irregular living, and rounds of worldly folly, generally curtail the span of our pilgrimage, while consistent piety, removed from all these excesses, carry it forward to a distant term.

But though we *desire* old age, yet we all fear its approach, and though willing to live, yet we are afraid to die. Old age is a lease which nature grants but to few, and that, upon condition of enduring all its trials.

It has been the prayer of the great and good, that they might never outlive their usefulness: and when we behold the aged, hoary, not with wisdom, but with hairs, we tremble lest they have lived in vain. But when we contemplate the pious patriarch spared for three score years and ten, who has been both parent and priest of his domestic flock, he resembles, indeed, a fruitful palm tree, which, *still yielding fruit in its old age*, is only waiting for the transplantation of the master of the vineyard. Many are they which have flourished thus around us; but their time of vigor and usefulness has expired, and now they beautify, and enrich the paradise of GOD. Holy and immortal spirits! the tears of a whole generation, the Church, and your pious friends, hallow your remains! We love, we honor, we embalm your memory! Once you stood among us, indeed, like venerable palm trees, and though long living under your refreshing shade—though enjoying the rich fruits your love and wisdom imparted, we never

* What a singular illustration is this tree, in this particular, of the period of the vigor and the term of the life of man!

tasted their sweetness till now—we never realized your worth till you were gone!

> "Like birds whose beauties languish, half concealed,
> Till mounted on the wing, their glossy plumes
> Expanded, shine with azure, green, and gold—
> How blessings brighten as they take their flight!"

But the resemblance, faint as it is, goes beyond this world. Though *the righteous be gathered to their fathers*, yet it was only the separation of mind from matter which we wept over;—their immortal spirits soared far beyond these mortal precincts to perfect the life they here began. Oh! my brethren, *'tis not the whole of life to live, nor all of death to die!* See the crystalis cast off its leafy covering, and mount upon golden wings into the air! Behold the torpid insect and bird resuming their suspended vitality, and living again after being enshrouded in a temporary oblivion! Immortal offspring of GOD! are ye not much better than they, and feel ye not holier, and loftier aspirations? Recollect *Enoch* and *Elijah* conveyed to Heaven on chariots of fire! Remember him who burst the icy fetters of the tomb, and *became the first fruits of them that slept!*

Former generations have been swept away,—we ourselves are rapidly following the sad procession, but our immortal spirits cannot die more than matter which merely changes its form. The souls of *the righteous* are still alive, and, though like the air invisible to flesh and blood, yet they exist before GOD, in a glorious form. GOD, *is the* GOD *of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, though their bodies have long ago been mingled with the dust; and although the remains of those we love have been consigned to the winds of Heaven, yet GOD *is not a* GOD *of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto him.*

The promise that *the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree*, still cheers and sustains their souls. They are waiting in the world of spirits, in holy hope for the final catastrophe of nature, when *the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.* They are waiting *under the altar* for the advent of the Son of Man *with clouds*, when *every eye*

shall see him, and the impenitent alone shall quake, and call the rocks and mountains to cover them! They are waiting for the army of angels, and arch-angels, Cherubim, and Seraphim, who are coming to convey them to *the joy of their Lord.* They are waiting to hear that beloved voice which shall pronounce to them like the seven thunders—*well done good and faithful servant!* —and to listen to that mighty chorus of *much people in Heaven saying* ALLELUJAH! SALVATION, AND GLORY, AND HONOUR, AND POWER UNTO THE LORD OUR GOD!

Then, when the worldly and profane shall be like the *chaff, which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth:* When the *formalist* and the sceptic shall both be withered and *cut down* as the *barren fig-tree* by its Lord; *when all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and the day that cometh, shall burn them up saith the* LORD *of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch:*—Then men and brethren, amidst the vast and glorious company of angels whose music is waxing ever *sweeter* and *louder*—in *the Heaven of Heavens*, among ten thousand times ten thousands, and *thousands of thousands*, where they shall be dazzled and delighted by the glories of its treasures—*then*, and *there*,—*the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree*—*then*, and *there*, ye faithful servants of JESUS CHRIST, ye *shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon, for those that be planted in the house of the* LORD, *shall flourish in the courts of our* GOD! *Then*, and *there*, may all of us become *trees of righteousness, the planting of the* LORD, *that he may be glorified*—and to *every one of us*, whether young, or aged, whether bowed down by affliction, or rejoicing in the lap of prosperity—whether elevated by rank, or depressed by the pangs of poverty—may the blessed promise be realized in *rich*, and *enrapturing* reality,—THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL FLOURISH LIKE THE PALM TREE. Amen and Amen.

THE RIGHTEOUS FLOURISHING.

Holy palm! to heaven tending—
Like *the righteous*, ever sending
Upright wishes, words, and doing,
Toward the heaven they're pursuing!

Holy palm! thy top o'ershading
All the *weary, heavy laden*,—
Emblem of the *righteous* blessing,
All in joy or pain caressing!

Holy palm! thy branches bending
Rich with fruits their nurture lending;
Like the *righteous*, kindly yielding
Fruits of holiness unceasing!

Holy palm! thy trunk o'erpow'ring
Every pressure, heavenward towering—
Thus the *righteous*, trials braving,
Make them the blest means of saving.

Holy palm! 'mid ages lasting;—
Storms and calms;—thy verdure casting;
Ev'ry age and climate;—spreading
Fruits of thy perennial shedding.

Thus *the righteous* ever flourish,
Heavenly palms which angels nourish;
Here below in years maturing,
Love, respect, and joy ensuring.

Holy palms! *above* transplanted
By those streams for which ye panted,
You as *righteous* trees, they'll nourish!—
Palms of heaven! you'll ever flourish. J. G.

IMMORTALITY.

Is not the human frame a lyre
  Strung by celestial hands—
Tun'd by the soul's electric fire,
  And waiting her commands?

The soul this instrument essays,
  Breathes music from its wires;
Or strikes to harsh, discordant lays,
  Till its last breath expires.

Then sickness loosens all its strings,
  Its pins dissolve away,
And death remorseless flaps his wings
  O'er music's sad decay.

Borne from the tuneless ruins—see
  Th' immortal Minstrel flies—
Her powers more kindl'd, pure and free
  To mansions in the skies.

Where love and memory alone
  Her song of praise shall send
To him who sits upon the throne,
  Her parent and her friend.

Until the Angel's trump inspires
  Her moulder'd lyre with breath—
Then shall she wake in heaven its wires,
  No more to sleep in death.

J. G.

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